Commentary

VOLUME NINETY-SIX • NUMBER THREE • SEPTEMBER 1993

Israel's New Pollyannas

David Bar-Illan

The Peace Process (Cont'd.)

Norman Podhoretz & Critics

A Conservative Looks at Liberalism

William Kristol

My 1950's Joseph Epstein

The First Post-Ancient Jew Hillel Halkin

Sex & the Feminists Carol Iannone

Le Carré in Russian Eyes Walter Laqueur

Books in Review: Richard Pipes / Leon R. Kass / Jay P. Lefkowitz / John J. Miller / Arch Puddington

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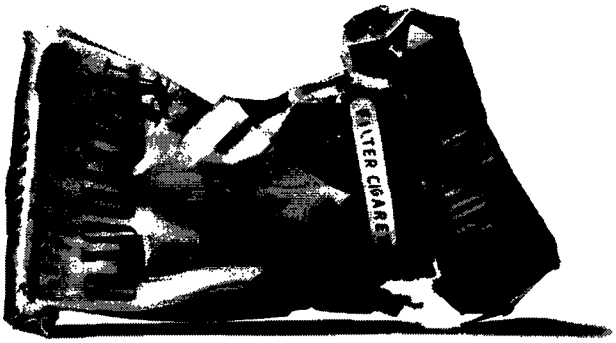

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VOLUME 96 NUMBER THREE *SEPTEMBER 1993*

Articles **27** Israel's New Pollyannas *David Bar-Illan*

33 A Conservative Looks at Liberalism *William Kristol*

37 My 1950's *Joseph Epstein*

43 The First Post-Ancient Jew *Hillel Halkin*

Observations **51** Sex & the Feminists *Carol Iannone*

54 Le Carré in Russian Eyes *Walter Laqueur*

Letters **2** The Peace Process (Cont'd.)

Yigal Carmon, Shlomo Gazit, Martin Liquornik, Kenneth Levin, Arnold M. Soloway, Arno Herzberg, Samuel L. Tennenbaum, Jeffrey Hart, E.B. Ayal, George E. Rubin, Matthew A. Rosenblatt, Sam Cramer, Steven Plaut, Larry Derfner, Jerold S. Auerbach, Donald Feldstein, Berel Lang, Morton A. Klein, Ruth King, Alex Rose, Mitchell Finkel, Paul Flacks, David Horowitz, David Basch, Jerome Greenblatt, David Gerstman, Miriam Diskind, and Norman Podhoretz

Also, letters from *Phil Gramm, Robert H. Haines, David Broyles, Arthur S. Greebler, Jude Wanniski, Irwin M. Stelzer, Semyon Reznick, Peter Brodsky*

Books in Review **56** Pandaemonium, by Daniel Patrick Moynihan *Richard Pipes*

58 Assimilation versus Separation, by Aaron Wildavsky *Leon R. Kass*

61 Play Ball, by John Feinstein *Jay P. Lefkowitz*

64 A Different Mirror, by Ronald Takaki *John J. Miller*

65 Days of Grace, by Arthur Ashe *Arch Puddington*

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The Peace Process (Cont'd.)

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

As a senior member of the Israeli team negotiating with Syria for the first five rounds of the peace process that started in Madrid, and as a close observer of the five additional rounds of talks that have been held since the change of government in Israel, I would like to add a few pertinent facts about that area of the peace process to the debate over Norman Podhoretz's two Statements on the Peace Process [April and June 1993].

Syria refuses to sign a bilateral peace treaty with Israel. Nor is Syria ready for peace in the true sense. As defined by then-President Bush, true peace means the normalization of relations between the two countries, including the exchange of ambassadors, tourism, commerce, etc. Syria rejects this. It contends that the aim of the negotiations is the implementation of Security Council Resolution 242, which Syria interprets as commanding Israeli withdrawal from *all* territories occupied in the Six-Day War of 1967 (though, of course, Resolution 242 does not use the word "all"), in exchange for nothing more than an end to the state of belligerency (though, of course, Resolution 242 calls for the "right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries").

The Syrian position has not changed since day one. Even a major Israeli concession—the agreement by the Labor government to a withdrawal from the Golan Heights (the degree of which to be determined by the degree of peace to which Syria will agree)—has failed to produce any reciprocal Syrian move. "Peace is not a treaty," the chief Syrian negotiator, Ambassador Muwaffaq al-Allaf, insists in repeatedly avoiding a contractual bilateral commitment, "peace is a state of mind."

Ambassador Allaf has made the Syrian position clear not only behind closed doors but also in public. Thus, on September 20, 1992, in an interview with Radio Monte Carlo, he stated that "even after Israel's withdrawal from all the occupied territories, the peace treaty will be left for the time being. . . ."

Indeed, when Syrian spokesmen, on all levels, speak about a "full," "comprehensive," or "total" peace, they *never* include the essential element of peace in its true sense: a bilateral treaty with Israel involving normalization of relations in (to use President Bush's words) "all its aspects."

President Clinton also used these words in a letter sent to Hafez al-Assad between the ninth and tenth rounds. In that letter Clinton strongly implied that if Syria would agree to such a peace, the United States would put pressure on Israel to make additional concessions. But Assad never replied, except indirectly through the press, where he once again made clear his refusal to conclude a contractual peace in all its aspects with Israel, and urged the U.S. to pressure Israel in order to advance the negotiations.

This refusal is what blocked any progress in the talks at the time of the Likud government, and it is precisely what blocks them now.

A document reiterating the Syrian position was officially submitted to the Israeli negotiating team in the second part of the sixth round (*after* the Israeli concession over the Golan!). Syria was willing to make the document public but *Israel* requested that it be kept secret.

Syria also rejects the following:

- An interim settlement.
- A "security settlement" in Lebanon to be concluded by Syria and Israel, as a first step. Both Israel and the U.S. proposed this but were turned down. (Syria has also prevented Lebanese authorities from disarming Hezbollah, which thus remains the only armed militia continuously causing crises on the Israeli-Lebanese front—the most serious of which, of course, erupted in the last week of July.)
- Confidence-building measures.
- Incremental agreements, such as one to refrain from hostile propaganda (in which Israel is not engaged anyway).
- A summit meeting between President Assad and Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin or between Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and his counterpart Farouk al-Sharaa, who called this Israeli suggestion "a silly idea."

None of this necessarily means

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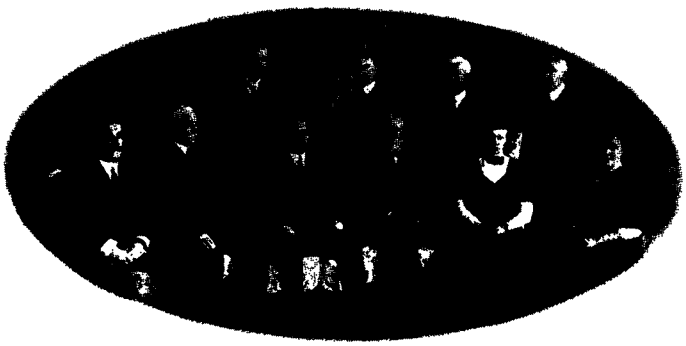

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that the Syrian position is written in stone and will never change. Conceivably Assad might some day follow Sadat's historic example and opt for real peace. But he has not done so yet.

I am not against concessions in principle. On the contrary, I consider them essential to any peace process, and I personally support a willingness on the part of Israel to make concessions. What I do not support—and what I consider insupportable—are unilateral concessions by Israel. Such concessions are, in fact, a form of appeasement that should be judged—given the implications for Israel's security and survival—first and foremost on a moral basis. Not to mention that appeasement never works.

YIGAL CARMON
Jerusalem, Israel

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

As a former head of Israeli Military Intelligence, I would like to respond to Norman Podhoretz's criticism of the Rabin government's peacemaking policy. Mr. Podhoretz categorically rejects the peace process. He argues that:

- The Middle East is still not ripe for peace.
- The Arabs have not indicated serious intent to make peace.
- The rise of radical Islamic fundamentalism further decreases prospects for peace.

Mr. Podhoretz could be right or wrong. There is no way to find out short of holding negotiations to assess the other side's readiness for concessions. That is exactly what Menachem Begin did with Egypt from 1977 to 1979. And that is what Israel is trying to do today.

In my opinion, we may have a chance to reach an acceptable solution. And if we miss this opportunity we will not only lose time but will pay with blood and a growing socioeconomic burden. In several years we could end up back at the negotiating table under considerably worse conditions.

Every negotiation entails risks, but I fail to see where Mr. Podhoretz gets the impression that Israel, led by Yitzhak Rabin, will ever accept agreements that could jeopardize its security.

Let me now discuss first Syria and then the Palestinians.

1. *Syria.* Syria has no reason to believe that it can get all or most of the Golan Heights back without making full peace with Israel. Of course, Assad would prefer to avoid paying this price. Like Sadat, he would no doubt have been glad to see Israel disappear altogether.

The Syrians will accept a peace treaty with Israel only because of:

- A deep conviction that the Arabs are incapable of militarily destroying Israel.
- A psycho-political need to regain the Golan Heights.
- Increasing pressure within Syria, fueled by war fatigue, to change the national order of priorities.

When Syria offers us "Total Peace for Total Withdrawal," we do not know what it means by "Total Peace." But it certainly sounds like more than mere "nonbelligerence."

Mr. Podhoretz asks, appropriately: even if we sign a treaty, how can we be assured that Assad's heir will honor it? We cannot, and yet my answer is: Assad's successor will likely be guided by the same considerations of Syrian interests that guide Assad today, as happened in Egypt; it is one thing to oppose a policy prior to implementation, and another to reverse a political reality after a treaty has been signed and implemented; and if the treaty includes reliable security arrangements (and Israel will never agree to anything less), then even a change in the Syrian regime is manageable. Security arrangements will be a major deterrent to renewed aggression.

Mr. Podhoretz sees no signs that Syria has changed its position regarding peace. . . . Yet if he read the Syrian media, he would see that since the beginning of the peace process, and especially in the last six months, Assad has been preparing Syrian public opinion for peace with Israel. A June 27 *New York Times* article, in which Syrian officials and ordinary people openly discussed peace with Israel, reinforces this assessment.

What does the Syrian citizen read in his own official press? Assad has become the "hero of war *and peace.*" The media again and again explain the importance of peace for Syrian welfare, prosperity, and economic development. They write, "Syria is heading for peace" and "Peace is a central Syrian interest," while Israel is portrayed as resisting the peace process.

2. *The Palestinians.* Mr. Podhoretz asks whether Israel could prevent the transformation of Palestinian "autonomy" into an independent state.

This is the wrong question. The real question is whether an independent Palestinian state alongside Israel could pose a threat to Israel's existence. For decades we held as sacred the idea that raising a Palestinian flag in a sovereign state would be tantamount to a death sentence for Israel. The time has come to reexamine this assumption.

A Palestinian state might or might not pose a serious security threat, depending on the outcome of the negotiations. Clearly, we cannot depend on Palestinian good will. I personally know many Palestinians whose intentions I fully trust, but they may not prevail. Moreover, a Palestinian state could someday be overtaken by radical Islamic fundamentalism, which rejects Israel's very existence.

Also, we cannot trust international political and military guarantees. In the end, we can count only on the Israeli army's ability to defend Israel under all contingencies.

A peace treaty must contain the following elements:

- The treaty must be comprehensive, including agreements on all disputed issues. With the Palestinians this means ending violent struggle, and agreeing on borders, Jerusalem, refugees, and the Israeli settlements in the territories. From talks that I have held with Palestinians, I believe that an understanding on these questions is feasible.
- The timetable for implementation must link progress in resolving the above issues to the transfer of authority and Israeli withdrawal.
- A Palestinian state must accept indefinite demilitarization of its entire territory.
- Some Israeli security forces must remain stationed within the territories—by mutual consent—for as long as is deemed necessary.

Will the Palestinians accept such stringent conditions? Perhaps not. However, we cannot know until we negotiate fully.

The choice is not between a risk-free solution versus a dangerous adventure. The real choice is between two difficult and risky options. Eventually both sides will have to compromise and choose the lesser of two evils: a political settlement, offering the Palestinians a far-reaching and generous

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proposal that in no way compromises Israel's ability to defend itself against any military threat.

If Norman Podhoretz is indeed right and the Arabs are not ready for such a solution, Israel is smart and strong enough to resist a disadvantageous deal. However, it would be foolish of us to quit the negotiations without fully exploring the chances for a real agreement.

I fail to see why, as Mr. Podhoretz suggests, we should forgo this opportunity to put the Arab side to the test.

SHLOMO GAZIT

Tel Aviv, Israel

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Israel's strategic situation has changed fundamentally in the last five to ten years, and the time factor is beginning to work against and not for us. As a matter of historical record, during the Yom Kippur war our first worry was to bring the Golan settlers and their families into safety in Israel, before even thinking of fighting the Syrians. An empty Golan may eventually be a fortress against an attacking army, but this is obviously not true of a populated one; instead of the Golan Heights protecting us, thanks to the settlers, we have to protect them! . . .

The Gulf war brought the fundamental change in the overall strategic situation to everyone's attention. The advent of medium and long-range missiles in the Middle East has changed the rules of war for us and has brought the war to the main population centers of Israel. Norman Podhoretz rightly points out that Assad is arming himself with missiles; we are doing the same and for the same reasons, but with one small difference: we are producing them, while Assad has to buy them. However, the point of the matter is that our pain threshold is very low indeed. The few Iraqi handmade low-grade Scud missiles, which just made it and hit Tel Aviv, brought home to us that a demilitarized Golan Heights may perhaps be a better deal than having Tel Aviv destroyed and/or gassed by Syrian or perhaps Iranian missiles. While conventional missiles will not decide the outcome of the war, gas or nuclear ones may wipe out our population. . . .

Mr. Podhoretz says he does not believe Assad, Faisal Husseini, and Arafat, but what is the alternative?

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Is it important that the Arabs acknowledge it?

In the on-again/off again Mid-East Peace Conference, the Arabs, insist that meetings take place in Madrid, in Washington or some other locale far from the area of conflict. The Israelis wanted to convene in the respective capitals of the involved parties. It seemed like a reasonable suggestion. After all, Jerusalem is only 150 miles from Damascus, Syria, and only 80 miles from Amman, Jordan. But the Arabs did not accept that suggestion and insisted on a site as far away from home as possible. Why would they wish to impose such inconvenience on themselves? They believed that meeting with Israel in their respective capitals might by inference be considered as their recognition of Israel's existence.

What are the facts?

A Denial of Reality: Despite decisive military defeats in the wars that they have launched against the Jewish state, the Arabs deny the existence of the country that has inflicted such severe and repeated punishment on them. When it becomes inevitable to mention the Jewish state at all it is insolently referred to only as "the Zionist entity". This non-acknowledgement of Israel's existence is not simply a matter of semantics. Arab maps do not show Israel, but a vast area labeled as "Palestine". Cities such as Tel Aviv and Haifa simply don't exist. Arab school children have no "official" knowledge of the existence of Israel. Schedules of foreign airlines that show Israel on their route maps or that list Israeli destinations are not allowed in most Arab countries. Foreign publications print special editions for the Arab countries, since no publication carrying advertising of Israeli firms may appear in those countries. And, of course, tourists of any nationality may not enter most Arab countries if their passports show evidence that the holders have ever visited Israel, the "non-existent country".

"Israel's existence is in no way dependent on the recognition of any Arab state. It's simple: Israel exists because it exists."

Israel Exists because it Exists: As an inducement to Israel for yielding lands that are absolutely indispensable for the country's defense, the "West Bank" and the Golan Heights, the Arabs now and then offer the possibility of the "recognition" of Israel's existence. The sad and almost incomprehensible aspect of that is that many well-meaning people in the U.S.,and in other countries believe that this might be an acceptable bargain for Israel. But it's a self-defeating exercise. Israel's existence is in no way dependent on the recognition of any Arab state. It's simple: Israel exists because it exists. Therefore, suppose that meaningful meetings came about between Israel and an Arab country, and suppose that an Arab diplomat would ask what Israel would be prepared to "give" if that Arab country would consider acknowledging Israel's existence. Israel should reply that it in turn would consider acknowledging that Arab country's existence. Or, Israel could declare a boycott of the Arab world and could offer to relax or to rescind such boycott in consideration of parallel gestures by that Arab country.

The bizarre concept of Israel's "non-existence" has been around for over forty years. Many have been led to believe that Israel should bring substantial sacrifices, so as to get the Arabs to acknowledge Israel's existence. It is often said that Israel needs to be "recognized" by the Arabs in order to "normalize her condition". But need not the Arabs, too, live in "normalized conditions"? And Israel is often promised that, in return for yielding vital strategic territory to the Arabs, she would be assured of "safe and secure borders". But don't the Arabs also need borders that are safe and secure? The Arab countries have come to believe that peace is only good and desirable for Israel. But it is surely at least as important for the Arabs, who have lived through five wars with Israel—the "non-existent country". Peace and prosperity can and will come to this troubled region only when the Arabs accept the reality of Israel's existence and negotiate with her in good faith.

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He quotes Kissinger saying that most wars have broken out between nations previously at peace; but then the opposite is also true: every peace begins by talking to your enemy. . . .

The danger for us lies not in any parallel with the destruction of the First Temple and Jeremiah's prophecy, but rather with the destruction of the Second Temple and the role played in it by the Zealots, Bar Kochba, and their fundamentalist followers. . . . Some 600,000 Jews lost their lives to the Roman soldiers and Dio Cassius commented laconically, "all of Judea became almost a desert." Today we have a lot of Rabbi Akibas, Bar Kochbas, and, especially, a lot of zealots.

Yes, Mr. Podhoretz should meddle in Israeli affairs, but he should choose the side of reason and democracy and not that of messianic nationalistic zealotry.

MARTIN LIQUORNIK
Givatayim, Israel

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

As someone who fully shares Norman Podhoretz's concern for Israel's security and his skepticism regarding the Rabin government's approach to current negotiations, I take every opportunity to listen to representatives of the governing parties in Israel, hoping, like Mr. Podhoretz, to have my concerns dispelled. But every such encounter only intensifies my misgivings.

A recent talk given in the Boston area by Knesset member and Meretz leader Ran Cohen is a case in point. I had anticipated that Cohen, a respected reserve officer whose military expertise must surely have included a capacity for clear-eyed assessment of challenging situations, would offer carefully thought-out arguments. Instead, he uttered the same nebulous and untenable analyses one hears from other coalition representatives.

To be sure, Cohen opened by asserting that he is determined Israel will remain capable of defending itself. But he also made clear his conviction that Israel ought to cede virtually all the territory captured in 1967, including the Golan Heights and the Jordan Valley, and retain only Jerusalem. He said nothing of how Israel's security might be maintained after such withdrawals.

Cohen went on to declare that war is bad, Israel needs peace, and the current government, unlike its predecessor, is intent on hammering out agreements with Israel's neighbors. But those skeptical about the current peace process fear that, by its concessions in pursuit of unenforceable agreements, the government will undermine Israel's capacity to defend itself and increase, rather than decrease, the likelihood of war. Mr. Cohen never touched on this possibility.

Similarly, he stressed that Israel must move quickly to secure agreements because conditions for negotiations are more promising now than they might be later. The rise of Islamic fundamentalism, for example, may eventually render the Arab parties less amenable to negotiations. But in arguing that negotiating conditions are better now than they may be later, Cohen failed to address a more fundamental point: are these conditions sufficient to attain a genuine, durable peace in return for Israeli concessions?

Cohen assured his audience that Syria is prepared for genuine peace, but referred only to some cryptic public statements by Assad as evidence. Nor did he address the issue of similar, highly ambiguous public statements having been made in the past by many other Arab leaders when they were wooing Western, particularly American, opinion, only to be withdrawn later. Examples include remarks by Saddam Hussein in the late 1980's, shortly before he shifted to threats to incinerate half of Israel and, subsequently, to missile attacks on Tel Aviv.

Cohen also assured his audience that the future Palestinian state which he advocates would be democratic because, he explained, the Palestinians, having lived under an occupation, have come to appreciate the value of democracy. This novel piece of reasoning would no doubt startle the Palestinians' Arab brethren, who, in their almost two-dozen countries, have invariably seen the achievement of Arab sovereignty accompanied by the installation of homegrown dictatorships.

Addressing the rising power of Hamas in the Palestinian community, Cohen attributed the influence of the fundamentalists to the absence of progress in the peace talks, decried the "negative" response of the government—the temporary expulsion of 400 Hamas militants—as simply promoting the prestige of the rejectionists, and called for "positive" steps to aid Palestinian moderates.

During a question-and-answer period, I asked why he attributed a rise in fundamentalist fervor among the Palestinian Arabs simply to Israeli policies when that same fervor is sweeping much of the Arab world. Moreover, its key social precipitants, including disgust with a corrupt secular leadership, are to be found among the Palestinian Arab population irrespective of the conflict with Israel.

Cohen's response was merely to assert that while my comments had some validity, his personal friendships with Palestinians persuaded him that peace could be had. . . .

Other comments by Cohen were at once uglier and more peculiar. He informed his audience that evacuation of the settlers from the territories posed no problem because the settlers' ultimate concern is money and they can be paid to abandon their homes and return to pre-1967 Israel. He believed that the Palestinians, despite their statements to the contrary, would allow the few Jews who actually might want to remain to do so on condition that Israel would be generous in permitting Palestinians into pre-1967 Israel. Apparently, he saw nothing wrong with Arab insistence on a *Judenrein* West Bank and Gaza and did not regard the nearly 900,000 Arabs already living as citizens in pre-1967 Israel as precedent enough for Jews being tolerated in potentially Arab-controlled areas. . . .

Missing from Ran Cohen's talk, as it is from most statements by the current Israeli government, was any serious discussion of how well or ill the government's negotiating objectives conform to the conditions necessary for a secure and lasting peace.

KENNETH LEVIN
Newtonville, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Norman Podhoretz need make no apologies. The substance of his criticism of the Rabin coalition's headlong pursuit of "peace" is totally consistent with his past positions. . . .

Clearly, any *responsible* critic of or commentator on the peace process has to treat seriously . . . the reality that—unrelated to the

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Arab-Israel dispute—the Middle East remains "a conflict-ridden and conflict-generating area." It is a region dominated by inter-Arab tensions and hostilities; ethnic, tribal, and sectarian divisions; political and religious ferment. These divisive forces threaten every Arab ruling regime, exert decisive influence on Arab attitudes and policies, and thwart development of the basic political stability that is an essential precondition for peace.

Simply and sadly put, force and violence still are the usual means of conflict-resolution within and between Arab states. Respect for human rights and democratic norms is absent; international treaties, agreements, and the rule of law are paid little heed.

This last point is especially pertinent. The historical record testifies to the fact that treaties, pledges, and agreements among Arab nations are easily discarded when power alignments shift in the Arab world. By what conceivable logic can one argue that treaties and agreements with Israel would be treated differently?

Further, responsibility demands that the seekers of "peace now" directly address the continuing Arab boycott of companies dealing with Israel; the increased sponsorship of terrorism by Syria, Sudan, Iran, and others; the continued flow of anti-Semitic canards in the state-controlled media of Egypt and Saudi Arabia; and the race for long-range missile systems and other sophisticated weaponry that is now taking place throughout the Arab world. . . .

Responsibility also demands that rather than uncritically accepting the double-speak of Yasir Arafat or the whispered blandishments of a few Arab intellectuals, the seekers of "peace now" account for the ongoing spate of official and unofficial statements from PLO and other Arab leaders, prominently played up in the Arab media, which demonstrate their continuing rejection of Israel's right to exist. . . .

And, of course, one cannot ignore Hamas, widely regarded as the fastest growing influence among the Palestinian Arabs. Hamas . . . simply states, unequivocally, that "Israel will continue to exist until Islam eliminates it, just as Islam eliminated what preceded it." . . .

Where is convincing evidence that a hostile Arab world has been transformed and is prepared now to accept Israel's right to exist as a sovereign state in the Middle East? As the current peace negotiations themselves attest, such evidence still does not exist. And that is the most fundamental reality the seekers of "peace now" cannot or will not recognize. . . .

The long-term challenges to *real* Middle East peace and Israel's survival can be met only if we demand a more sober-minded recognition of the history, culture, and political realities of the Middle East. The surrender of territory, an irrevocable act, in return for a paper peace that is easily repudiated does nothing to address those realities or to ensure Israel's survival. In time, however, if Israel maintains genuinely defensible borders and an effective military deterrent, the Arab world *can* be brought to accept the pragmatic reality of Israel.

Only then will the chance for durable peace be real. Only then will we be able to speak responsibly of "peace now." That, I believe, is the essential substance of Norman Podhoretz's position, now as in the past.

ARNOLD M. SOLOWAY
Center for Near East Policy Research
Boston, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Norman Podhoretz's Statements offer, for the first time, a realistic approach to a situation which is becoming more and more untenable. We cannot simply be intoxicated by the word "peace." We should, to begin with, be suspicious that the Arabs refuse to define what kind of peace they want, what form it should take, and whether it means more than the absence of war. . . .

The Arabs have learned that their "no" to every concession the Rabin government makes has produced more concessions. They are well aware of the fact that . . . Rabin's promise during the election campaign that peace with the Palestinians would be achieved in nine months, and with the Syrians within a year, is coming to haunt him. He is also under pressure from the Americans who are chasing after their illusions and are eager to keep the talks going at any price. It is not a pleasant situation. . . . What the Arabs could not achieve on the battlefield, they want to gain at the peace table.

What kind of peace can we expect? Let us consider the case of Egypt, the only Arab country to have signed a peace treaty with Israel. Egypt has violated the military provisions of the treaty. . . . Trade between the two countries is one-sided: Israel imports Egyptian goods but Egypt buys only a limited amount of Israeli goods. Egyptian companies still participate in the Arab boycott of Israel. Hostile propaganda in the government-controlled press continues unabated. Israeli tourists go to Egypt, but Egyptian tourists do not come to Israel. . . .

Sixty years of preaching hatred, conducting wars, and indulging in every kind of terror have created an Arab attitude of unlimited hostility that cannot be wiped out by a peace conference. Although the Arabs have been deprived of their Soviet protector and ally, they have not grasped the fact that their value to the West is rapidly declining. The price and consumption of oil are going down; disunity among Arab governments is growing; dictators like Assad do not live forever. Future events will change perceptions of power and principles of diplomacy and strategy.

There is an alternative to the peace process, expressed in an editorial in the *Jerusalem Post*: "The obvious, painful conclusion Israel must draw is that its hopes of integrating into the region and establishing true and lasting peace will have to await a sea change in Arab attitudes." The situation in the Middle East is fluid and developments quite uncertain. . . . If Israel does not succumb to Arab bullying and American "partnership" in the peace process, maybe playing a waiting game will result in real peace.

ARNO HERZBERG
Union, New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . No one in his right mind would object to the Arabs and Israel talking to each other—when the time is ripe. But is this the time? . . .

The Arabs have managed to split the peace process into two independent segments, "peace" and "process," making the latter the dominant issue. They procrastinate, sensing that time is on their side and that delay may help them achieve their goal of an inde-

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pendent Palestinian state which would be a way station to the eventual destruction of the "Zionist entity."

Neither side is sure of the direction that the third party, the United States, will take during the negotiations. Both sides see the inexperience and vacillation of the Clinton-Christopher foreign policy. Israel particularly is afraid that the Clinton administration will try to save face by imposing an unacceptable solution on Israel.

Instead of being maligned, Mr. Podhoretz ought to be praised for his far-sightedness. The political reality is that now is not the time for meaningful negotiations. Therefore, negotiations are not in Israel's interest. Unless and until Rabin widens his coalition, he is in no position to achieve his promise for peace—real peace, not a scrap of meaningless paper.

SAMUEL L. TENNENBAUM
West Orange, New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I have been following the debate about "criticizing" Israel in COMMENTARY and in the Sunday *New York Times*. Let me say that there is no real contradiction between Norman Podhoretz's new position and his earlier one: his consistency is the survival of Israel. The military facts cannot be denigrated as the product of either a "hard-line" or a "conservative" mentality. As I once noted, Napoleon said that geography is strategy. The new Likud leader, Benjamin Netanyahu, understands this clearly. He points out that the Judean and Samarian mountain ranges make virtually impossible an invasion of Israel from the east. He also understands that, militarily, the Golan Heights are necessary to the military security of Israel (though Gaza is not). Militarily, the formula "land for peace" is a recipe for suicide.

Israel's Arab and Egyptian neighbors are anything but stable. The area is being revolutionized by Islamic fundamentalism. What sort of "peace" under these conditions is worth diminishing military security?

JEFFREY HART
Lyme, New Hampshire

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I recently summarized what has been happening in the Arab-Israeli peace process since the last Israeli elections as follows: the Israeli government has embarked on a process of self-induced suicide, with the U.S. State Department acting as Dr. Kevorkian. . . . My frame of reference is "The Peace Imperative," an official document distributed . . . by Israeli diplomatic missions. From the June issue of COMMENTARY I learned that it was primarily written in response to Norman Podhoretz's April "Statement on the Peace Process." . . . In his June Statement, Mr. Podhoretz handled two of the most important issues raised by that document very well. Here I will deal with other sections which reveal the mind-set of the authors of the document, and which lead me to conclude that he was too mild in his criticism. . . .

"The Peace Imperative" . . . contains a strange mixture of fear (e.g., warning of potential danger from Iran) with an inflated sense of importance. For example, the claim that Israeli actions, which in this document invariably mean concessions, will significantly reduce "Islamic fundamentalism" in the region and the world. This obsession with Islamic fundamentalism raises some unsettling issues: (1) Here is another example of Israel trying to justify its existence not on self-evident right, but by claiming it can provide service to the world. (2) Israel used to encourage Islamic activities as a counterweight to PLO "nationalists"; this policy ended up facilitating the foundation of Hamas. (3) Now Israel has reversed course and is dangerously close to "koshering" the PLO, whose Covenant is not much less murderous toward Israel than that of Hamas.

The only Jewish ideology recognized in "The Peace Imperative" is the East European turn-of-the-century socialist notion of a "new Jewish person," . . . and we all know what happened to its cousin, Stalin's "new Soviet person." . . . Equally pathetic is the rather flimsy rationale used to justify dangerous concessions. For example: "Assad made a thinly veiled appeal to Israeli public opinion, noting 'the increased number of Israelis who want peace.'" I read this again and again and it is clear to me that Assad is not offering anything, let alone peace. On the contrary, he blames the absence of peace so far on the alleged absence of peace-lovers in Israel. He also obviously wants to influence Israeli public and official opinion to yield to his demands, and in this he has had some success, as Mr. Podhoretz has shown.

Reading this document eliminated my earlier hopes that there was some hidden sophistication behind the strange moves of the Israeli government. Reluctantly and with trepidation, because I do not wish to insult honorable and otherwise intelligent persons, I have to conclude that the closest model into which we can fit recent Israeli moves is that of the simpletons of Jewish folklore, "the wise men of Chelm."

How else can one explain the rather innovative "bargaining strategy" of giving away even before the sessions start much of what was supposed to be haggled over? . . . As could have been expected, the Arabs treated these concessions as a given and proceeded to demand further concessions. . . .

The following should remove any doubts about the Chelmite nature of such a "strategy." Israel has given up, one by one, matters of principle and safety valves that had originally been part of the Madrid formula. One of the latest was agreeing that Faisal Husseini, who is a resident of Jerusalem, be an official leader of the "Palestinian" delegation (one no longer hears that these people were supposed to be part of a Jordanian-Palestinian delegation). Rabin said that this would not affect the status of Jerusalem, which is the eternal united capital of Israel and is not subject to negotiations. Then, lo and behold, recently Jerusalem has been discussed . . . and it has already been decided to allow the Arab residents of Jerusalem to participate in the autonomy voting. . . .

The document contains lists of what Israel is giving up but no demands on the Arabs, not even that they stop the economic boycott now that no new Jewish communities are allowed in the territories. Even the not-too-friendly Bush-Baker regime demanded that. The only apparent exception—that Israel will not engage in discussion over the dimensions of withdrawal until the Syrians clarify whether they are prepared for full peace and normalization of relations—has already been violated. No such "clarification" was issued, yet Israel could not wait to make a major uncalled-for gift to Syria. An item on the front page of the July 1 *Wall Street Journal* says: "A senior Is-

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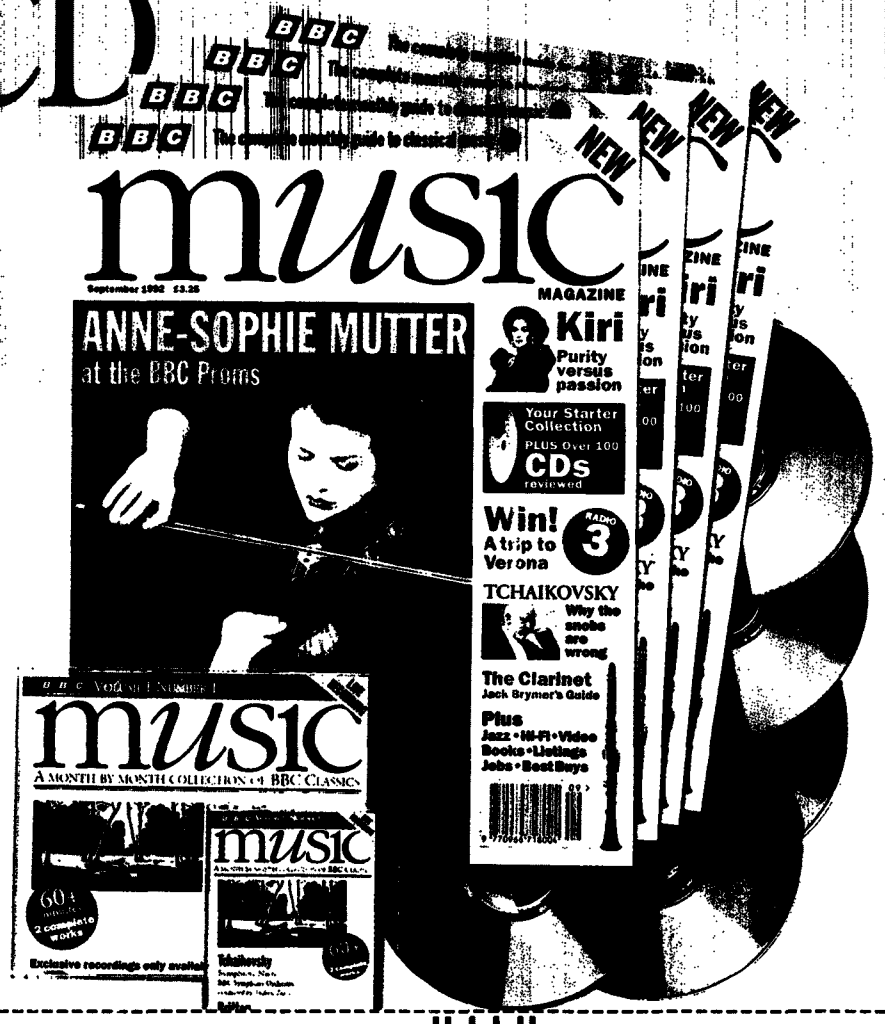
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raeli official disavowed any permanent claim by Israel to the Golan Heights which he described as 'occupied territory.'" Were I Assad, I would continue to sit tight and wait for the next Chelmite free gift, knowing that I would not have to wait long. . . .

Then there is the tinkering with history. . . . Consider the following: "Fate has decreed that the Israeli and Palestinian people share a narrow patch of land." I don't know who "fate" is and when he/she "decreed" anything. The current situation is a direct result of what Israelis and Arabs did or did not do.

The next sentence is an abomination: "The resulting hatred and violence have slowly worked [their] poison on both sides." I do not believe there is a single Israeli textbook containing anti-Arab instruction. In fact, I cannot recall an article in any of the many Israeli newspapers which denigrates Arabs as Arabs. This is rather remarkable given the history of the conflict. In the Arab states, on the other hand, the textbooks and the media are full of ferocious anti-Semitic and anti-Israel lies and hatred. And this did *not* start in 1967, nor did it start, as the Israeli document claims, "during the almost half-century of conflict which followed the creation of the state" (this is a typical internalization of the Arab line which maintains that trouble started when Israel was established). It started long before and was highlighted by the riots of 1920, 1929 (when the old Jewish community of Hebron was obliterated), 1936-39 (when quite a number of Jews were killed), and the years in between. . . .

The current Israeli government says that "Zionism emerged as the answer to perpetual insecurity. The Jewish catastrophe during World War II made the establishment of Israel an imperative." . . . In other words, the government accepts the Arab version of why Israel was established, and, thereby, the Arabs' collateral complaint that they have been asked to pay for the crimes the Europeans committed against the Jews. This official (!) document thus spits in the face of all those whose superhuman effort and dedication for more than a century (and the dreams of almost 2,000 years) came to fruition with Israel's independence and subsequent flourishing. And these are the people in whose hands the future of Israel now lies.

E.B. AYAL
University of Illinois
Chicago, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

At the conclusion of his June article, Norman Podhoretz writes that he is "praying with all my might that my analysis is wrong and the Rabin government and its spokesmen are right." Save your prayers for the people of Israel, Mr. Podhoretz. If the anti-national, socialist ideologues of the present government succeed in their goal of peace-at-any-price, Israel will be stripped of its strategic frontiers and historic heritage and emerge as a tiny, indefensible enclave able to survive only as a protectorate of the United States or the United Nations—if it still exists and has not already been destroyed in a second Holocaust after the fifth Arab war against Israel. . . .

GEORGE E. RUBIN
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

It is clear, after reading both of Norman Podhoretz's Statements, that he sees the "peace process [as] a trap from which it will be very hard for Israel to escape." Why, then, does COMMENTARY continue to use the misleading label "peace process"?

The Israelis want peace, but history has shown that the Arab nations are, and have been, uniformly opposed even to the idea of a Jewish state. What in fact has been going on ever since Israel returned the Sinai to Egypt . . . should more accurately be called the "surrender process." . . .

What the use of the phrase "peace process" accomplishes is to make Jews feel good with every step Israel takes toward the trap, and make them feel bad every time Israel balks at an outrageous Arab demand. Let COMMENTARY take the lead in calling this nefarious trap the "surrender process" that it is.

MATTHEW A. ROSENBLATT
Aberdeen, Maryland

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The Israeli Foreign Ministry's attack on Norman Podhoretz's "Statement on the Peace Process" is a disturbing manifestation of the topsy-turvy policy some elements in the Israeli government seem to be pursuing: attack Israel's American friends while coddling Israel's enemies. Consider the following:

• An article in the *Boston Globe* reports that, according to a Foreign Ministry spokesman, Israeli embassies may no longer distribute (in the words of the article) "inflammatory PLO material, such as its charter which calls for the destruction of Israel." Thus, statements which attack longstanding friends of Israel are freely issued by the Ministry, but even something as uncontroversial as a translation of the PLO Covenant may not be distributed, lest terrorists be offended.

• The recent forced resignation of Harvey Friedman, a vice president of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), after complaints from the Israeli Foreign Ministry. Friedman reported that in a meeting with three American Congressmen Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin expressed willingness to see Israel return to its pre-'67 borders (save for Jerusalem), a significant deviation from official Israeli policy. Beilin denied the report and took his revenge by having the Foreign Ministry intercede with AIPAC to force Friedman out. Incidentally, Friedman claims that his account of the meeting can be verified by the three Congressmen present.

• The highly partisan remarks of Avraham Burg, the number-three man in the Israeli Labor party, at a public meeting in Pittsburgh this past November at which he attacked AIPAC as radically right wing and excoriated the audience for not speaking out against the Israeli government during the period it was led by Likud.

Norman Podhoretz—like several other pro-Israel American commentators who have recently found themselves in the Foreign Ministry's sights—has been a loyal and consistent defender of the Jewish state. Under his stewardship, COMMENTARY has been an important and influential voice speaking out on behalf of Israel. The hysterical reaction that greeted his April Statement says more about the character of his critics—and their dubious "peace-in-our-time" ideology—than it does about Mr. Podhoretz's well-reasoned, temperate, and carefully-considered essay.

SAM CRAMER
Mountain View, California

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To the Editor of Commentary:

I would like to express my disagreement with Norman Podhoretz. But let me say first that this does not stem from any quarrel with Mr. Podhoretz's view that the current Israeli administration is leading itself down the primrose path in the peace negotiations and that it seems to have taken too literally the old admonition that it is better to give than to receive. I also have no problem with Mr. Podhoretz's characterization of many of his "dovish" critics in Israel and in the U.S. as hypocritical. The hypocrisy of the "peace activists" in both countries is neither new nor surprising. . . .

Second, I have no argument with the distinction he draws between his own criticism of Israeli policy, which is motivated by a sincere desire for Israeli security, and that of the Jewish Left, which, in spite of its protestations, is frequently not so motivated. Nor, in contrast to the Jewish Left, does Mr. Podhoretz argue that criticizing Israeli policy is legitimate, while criticizing the critics of Israeli policy is McCarthyite suppression.

Having said this, I am nevertheless unhappy with the implicit message in both of Mr. Podhoretz's Statements that American Jews should take sides in internal Israeli partisan politics. Let me briefly summarize my views:

• Representation without taxation is just as objectionable as taxation without representation. (Any American Jew who thinks that contributing to the Jewish National Fund or other charities is the moral equivalent of taxation should try living in Israel and paying Israeli taxes.)

• U.S. Jews do not bear the consequences of Israeli policy choices. Hence it is unethical of them to try to influence those choices. Israelis bear the consequences, economic and strategic, of their decisions, including their foolish ones. It is morally uncourageous to try to particpate in internal Israeli political debate without taking the admittedly quite difficult road of actually living in Israel.

• In the last election, 37 parties ran for office in Israel, not counting political groups who chose not to run (like Peace Now). If American Jews were to pick sides in Israeli electoral politics, they would squander their energies and resources on partisan bickering. If politicization were carried to its logical conclusion, with U.S. Jews allied with the Israeli parties of their choice, and if each group were to withhold financial and moral support for Israel when its party of preference was out of power, the bulk of American support for Israel would disappear, regardless of who was in power.

• U.S. Jews, who do not face daily conditions of life in Israel and who do not know the language, are at a disadvantage in terms of information and so should be cautious about second-guessing the Israeli electorate.

• Advice and pressure from outside Israel probably have little effect on Israeli public thinking and choice, and may even have a perverse effect, given the famous Israeli "*davka*" syndrome (doing the opposite out of orneriness).

• Media misrepresentation notwithstanding, the Israeli consensus on most strategic issues is broad enough so that friends of Israel may endorse that consensus without taking partisan sides.

Steven Plaut
University of Haifa
Haifa, Israel

To the Editor of Commentary:

Norman Podhoretz's argument about Jewish dissent on Israel leads inevitably to two propositions: (1) no American Jew, liberal or conservative, has the moral right to say anything about any Israeli security policy, and (2) Israelis themselves do not even have the moral right to criticize their own government's policy if that government is in the hands of Likud.

Mr. Podhoretz writes that in the days of Menachem Begin and Yitzhak Shamir he counseled against American Jews criticizing Israel on security issues: since their lives were not "on the line," they did not have the "standing to participate in the public debate." . . . But American Jewish supporters of Likud's Greater-Israel-Forever approach were also participating in the "public debate," and their lives were certainly not on the line. . . .

Another way that Likud's American Jewish advocates had of muzzling dissent against their favorite government was to say: "We don't have the right to urge Israel to give up territory because we won't have to bear the consequences." Now no one really knows what the consequences of such a withdrawal might be; they could be either good or bad. But we do know what the consequences of a Likud-favored status quo on the West Bank and Gaza already are, the most obvious being that to keep the territories forever, Israelis must forever risk their lives policing the Palestinians there. That is a real and current consequence, not a hypothetical one—and American Jewish Likudniks do not have to face it, do they? So what moral right did they have to speak out in favor of the Likud government's policy? . . . (There is a saying about such blood-and-fire right-wing American "Zionists": they will defend Israel down to the last drop of Israeli blood.)

So, based on Mr. Podhoretz's notion of the dues one has to pay to enter the debate over the occupation, not even American Jewish hawks have the right to open their mouths. But he actually goes one step further. American Jews, he writes, were morally forbidden from criticizing Likud policy because such criticism had

> dangerous political consequences. For one thing, [it] provided cover for ideological enemies of Israel and even outright anti-Semites, who were overjoyed at being able to quote Jews instead of having to rely exclusively on their own easily discounted forms of vilification.

I doubt whether these American Jews helped Israel's enemies. But if Mr. Podhoretz is correct, and Likud's American Jewish critics did bring joy to Israel's enemies, imagine the ecstasies these enemies must have experienced upon hearing Likud's *Israeli* critics. It follows, then, that if American Jews were morally required to fall in line behind Begin and Shamir, Israeli Jews were required to stand at the head of that line. . . .

Larry Derfner
Tel Aviv, Israel

To the Editor of Commentary:

. . . Like Norman Podhoretz, I was infuriated during the Begin-Shamir era by the incessant hectoring of Israel from the Diaspora Jewish Left, which often abetted Israel's most unrelenting enemies. Certainly Mr. Podhoretz is correct to note that with the arrival of Yitzhak Rabin and the departure of George Bush, political reality has changed dramatically. Criticism of Israel may subject Mr. Podhoretz to the charge of hypoc-

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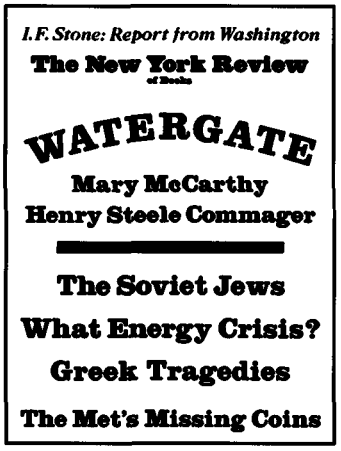

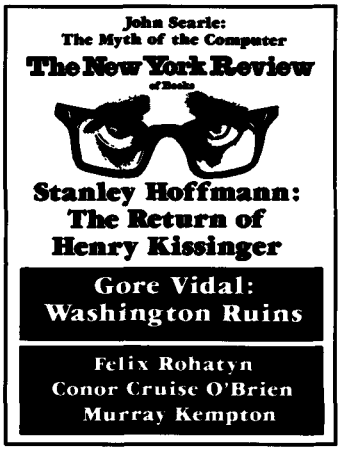

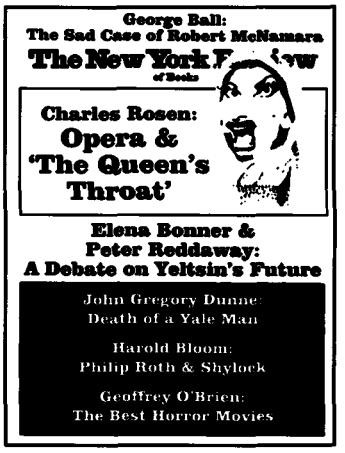

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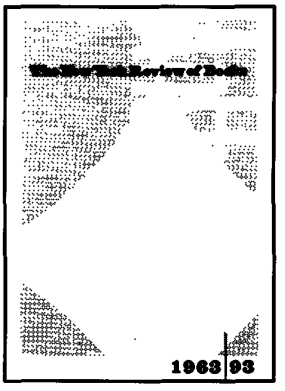

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risy, but it no longer exposes Israel to Diaspora sabotage.

As a Diaspora Jew, however, I remain uneasy about criticism of the government of Israel on security matters. Diaspora Jews cannot save Israel from itself if its own government is committed to the dubious proposition that relinquishing the Golan to Syria and Judea and Samaria to the Palestinians will, miraculously, increase the security of the Jewish state. . . .

To frame the issue exclusively in "security" terms, however, narrows the debate needlessly. If Diaspora Jews are not Israelis, certainly we share some common concerns as Jews. About these, at least, all Jews may speak; and Israel, which identifies itself as a *Jewish* state, for all the Jews in the world, may even be obligated to listen. In its proclamation of independence, the "Land of Israel" was identified as the "birthplace of the Jewish people," the source of our "spiritual, religious, and national identity." Israel declared itself the reconstituted national custodian for covenantal promises made long ago to the entire Jewish people. (As David Ben-Gurion once asserted, "The Bible is our mandate.") If Jews, all of us standing at Sinai, were not silent then about assuming our responsibilities as a people, why should we be silent now?

To some of Mr. Podhoretz's critics (like Alfred H. Moses writing in the June issue), this begins to sound suspiciously like an argument for a "'greater Israel' based on religious grounds or Revisionist ideology"—as though religion or Revisionism were, *ipso facto*, reasons for instant dismissal. And the Israeli embassy, clearly stung by Mr. Podhoretz's initial Statement, conveniently narrowed Zionist purpose to "spiritual and ethical goals," excluding religious imperatives or historic rights. But in any inclusive understanding of Judaism, or Zionism, these are not so easily relinquished.

Take what one fervently hopes is an extremely slim possibility: the government of Israel decides, for peace and security with the Palestinians, to relinquish the Old City of Jerusalem forever. Given the centrality of Jerusalem to Jews for historic and religious reasons, would anyone seriously question the responsibility of Diaspora Jews to participate in that debate? Is the answer to be found in "security," or in the very essence of the meaning of Jerusalem within Judaism? What about Hebron, an even more ancient holy and historical place for Jews? And Shiloh, where the ark of the covenant rested on its journey from Sinai to the Jerusalem Temple? Or Judea and Samaria in their entirety, the geographical and historical heartland of the biblical Land of Israel? . . .

Ultimately, exclusive focus on the debate about Israeli security is misplaced. Issues of national security may indeed be for Israelis to decide. But as long as Israel claims to be the national home of the entire Jewish people, certain decisions with Jewish consequences are far too important to be left solely to Israelis. No government of Israel may relinquish the Jewish historical patrimony and expect Diaspora silence. It is not a question of who may speak, but whose speech is most faithful to Jewish imperatives. Jews, in the United States or Israel, who continue to align themselves with the demands of Israel's implacable Arab enemies, can hardly make this claim in good faith.

JEROLD S. AUERBACH
Wellesley College
Wellesley, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . The heart of all the criticisms of Norman Podhoretz is that he is, at best, inconsistent, and, at worst, hypocritical in his attitudes toward the Likud and Labor parties in Israel.

Mr. Podhoretz's response to his critics includes partly pleading guilty and partly explaining the circumstances and the manner in which he intends to criticize Israel. But the charge against him is left essentially unanswered. One must conclude that the editor has gone a long way downhill between "J'Accuse" a decade ago [September 1982] and his two Statements. In the distinguished history of Norman Podhoretz as writer, journalist, editor, and Jew, these pieces will not be recalled as high points. . . .

Mr. Podhoretz ends his second Statement with the hope that time may prove him wrong and his critics correct. To which I can only add a fervent "amen."

DONALD FELDSTEIN
Teaneck, New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Norman Podhoretz is not to blame for the misconception of his critics that his "Statement on the Peace Process" contradicts his earlier call for silence by Jews outside Israel who object to Israeli government policies. Inconsistent perhaps, but not contradictory: to contradict his earlier position, Mr. Podhoretz would have to defend the expression of *all* such disagreement, and he explicitly denies this by setting two conditions. So (he writes in the June issue), there is "all the difference in the world between attacking Israel as an immoral or criminal state . . . and expressing doubts and anxieties over the prudence of the policies being pursued by the Israeli government. . . ." And then: "The political dangers involved in Jewish criticism of Israel's policies have for the moment faded."

I take these conditions to mean that external criticism is legitimate with respect to practical but not to moral issues *and* only if the criticism is unlikely to affect adversely the attitude toward Israel of other governments (principally, of course, the U.S.). But does Mr. Podhoretz really mean this? He says himself that he hopes for the failure of present peace negotiations. Would he not also hope, or allow the possibility, that his reasoning will influence readers, perhaps even members of the Clinton administration? . . . And would he not then be encouraging American pressure on Israel to prevent the concessions he opposes? If not this, for whom is he writing?

Perhaps having moved this far, Mr. Podhoretz may yet grant what in easier times would be commonplace: that of course it is Israeli citizens who will in the end decide Israel's policies—and that of course Jews outside Israel are entitled to express their views about these policies, even if the country they live in does not subsidize their implementation, but especially if it does. The alternative to this is a pretense of consensus that no knowledgeable observer would credit—a forced unanimity that does not exist in Israel itself and that new Israeli governments with other priorities may rightly resent—*and* the assumption that in order to support Israel one has to defend every one of its policies or acts. What is there to recommend this alternative on either prudential or moral grounds?

BEREL LANG
West Hartford, Connecticut

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To the Editor of Commentary:

In his last two articles, Norman Podhoretz discussed whether American Jewish criticism of Israeli policy is appropriate. What must be understood is that some types of criticism hurt Israel's image while others do not. . . .

Many American Jews have good reason to be legitimately concerned about extremist Arab attitudes, such as not even accepting Israel's right to exist. The PLO still sponsors most anti-Israel terrorism and refuses to amend its Covenant, which calls for the destruction of Israel. The PLO's Yasir Arafat told a group of Jewish journalists in Tunis recently that "Israel's goal is to capture all the land between the Tigris and the Euphrates." And the PLO continues to claim that the Holocaust did not occur. . . .

Syria continues its feverish efforts to develop chemical, biological, and other weapons, while its Minister of Information claims that Israeli policies are "reminiscent of Nazi methods" (*Jerusalem Post*, June 8, 1993). Faisal Husseini, the new leader of the Palestinian Arab delegation to the peace talks, has recently called for the dissolution of the Zionist entity in stages. When one adds to these belligerent statements and actions the fact that Arab regimes have repeatedly broken signed treaties (the Israeli-Arab armistice of 1949; the Iraqi recognition of Kuwait of 1962; the Iran-Iraq peace treaty of 1976)—it is no wonder that many American Jews look with skepticism upon current Arab rhetoric about making "peace" with Israel.

Morton A. Klein
Zionist Organization of America
Greater Philadelphia Chapter
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

To the Editor of Commentary:

. . . Ironically, the same Israeli Labor-party officials who are now reportedly so upset about American Jewish dissent from Israeli policy were until recently actively involved in instigating such dissent—when it suited their purposes. When criticsm by the American Jewish Left helped Labor undermine Likud, it was hailed by Laborites as "courageous" and "a legitimate attempt to facilitate peacemaking." From 1977 until Likud was toppled by Labor last year, prominent Israeli doves frequently visited America to whip up criticism of the Israeli government. Shimon Peres deserves a "frequent-flier" award for his many such trips, as does Abba Eban, whose torrent of op-ed pieces and lectures attacking the Israeli government made him the darling of the State Department and Israel-bashers in the American media. . . .

How ironic that the new Israeli ambassador in Washington, Itamar Rabinovich, who was so vividly offended by Mr. Podhoretz's April article that his embassy sent a two-page rebuttal to all Jewish newspapers, himself denounced the Likud government during many of his U.S. appearances when he was associated with Tel Aviv University.

Rabin, Rabinovich, and the others, having urged U.S. Jews to exercise their right as American citizens to speak out on Israeli policy, cannot expect anything less today from American Jews. . . .

Ruth King
New York City

To the Editor of Commentary:

. . . There is absolutely no comparison between Norman Podhoretz's newly formulated position with regard to criticism of Israel and the Israel-bashing of liberal American Jews when Likud was in power. . . . Mr. Podhoretz has expressed reasoned concern, a position hardly comparable to the actions of such groups as American Friends of Peace Now, which placed an ad in the *New York Times* alleging that Israel constituted the only impediment to peace in the Middle East, or to other groups which have called on the U.S. to put pressure on the Israeli government or which have met with enemies of Israel. . . .

Alex Rose
West Orange, New Jersey

To the Editor of Commentary:

How can we begin to talk about consistency and inconsistency without first agreeing on a frame of reference? . . . Certainly in an unchanging world it would be perfectly reasonable to make a fetish out of constancy. But, as we all know, people in political life tend to be as flighty as break dancers.

Consider, for example, Israel's Prime Minister, Yitzhak Rabin: on the eve of last year's election, he asserted that "anyone who comes down from the Golan forfeits Israel's security interest." That was

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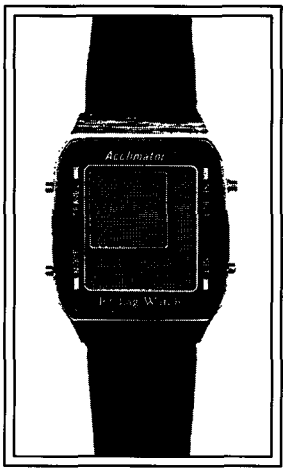

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last year. This year, as Prime Minister, he seems quite prepared to compromise this security interest.

Or consider the U.S. State Department: Washington is undoubtedly prodding Jerusalem to accede to a withdrawal from the Golan Heights, but there is no similar prodding by the State Department for a Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon.

Then there is the argument that only Israelis have the right to determine Israel's security needs. But that is precisely the point. According to a recent Gallup poll, 75 percent of the Israeli electorate would insist upon a national referendum before making any territorial concessions. . . . Given all these contradictions, all these vacillations, isn't it just a little glib to complain about inconsistency? . . .

I suspect that this debate has more to do with infidelity than with inconsistency. There are some Jews who would like to remain, at least in some measure, faithful to our ancient covenant, and there are others who would seek another covenant. Up until a few generations ago, Jewish civilization could be characterized as a religious civilization. Today, however, there are some Jews, both here and in Israel, who are indifferent to our religious past. What is particularly distressing about this development is that in the process of separating themselves from this past, these people have also abandoned large chunks of Jewish history. Without this history, without this past, there is really very little to keep the Jewish state, or, for that matter, the state of world Jewry, from becoming unglued. . . .

Of course I share Norman Podhoretz's anxieties. The peace process is a cul-de-sac whose only exit is a return to the 1967 lines. Such an Israel would be terminally vulnerable, a mere garrison state. Such an Israel would have to commit every possible resource just to stay alive. How could such an Israel possibly achieve its prophetic fulfillment?

MITCHELL FINKEL
Silver Spring, Maryland

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his extremely astute Statements on the Peace Process, Norman Podhoretz has provided a valuable service to the American Jewish community. Even those whose initial reaction was negative would be well advised to contemplate objectively the significance of what Mr. Podhoretz has written.

Another related matter affecting American Jews was the decision last spring by the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations to grant membership . . . to Americans for Peace Now (APN). The Zionist Organization of America (ZOA) made energetic efforts to inform the Conference and the community at large of APN's positions, and it succeeded in alerting those who had previously been unaware of APN to the true nature of the group. But in spite of these efforts, APN was accepted as a member of the Conference.

I was the last speaker at the tension-filled meeting on March 29, 1993, when the issue of admitting APN was voted on. I concluded my remarks with the following statement:

> While all of us in this room may have different philosophical, ideological, religious, and political points of view, every member of the Conference of Presidents is totally in agreement on one fundamental issue: that Jerusalem is and will remain the undivided capital of the sovereign state of Israel. If the conference votes to admit Americans for Peace Now it would be the first member of the conference which has failed to support, unequivocally, the one historic position which has universally united our community.

This plea did not succeed in changing the minds of those present. And thus, major Jewish organizations, both religious and secular, which in the past had been united on the question of Jerusalem, voted to bring into their ranks a group which believes that there are "many options" in connection with the status of Jerusalem—that, in other words, Jerusalem is "negotiable." . . .

APN boasts of its love for Israel and claims that its criticisms are voiced only out of concern for Israel's welfare, security, and future. Yet the course it advocates—an accommodation with the terrorist PLO—is detrimental to all three. APN's support for dialogue with the PLO is in fact contrary to the policies of Prime Minister Rabin's government. . . .

Of course, APN has a right to urge Israel to negotiate with the PLO, and it has a right to vacillate on the issue of Jerusalem. Nevertheless, the question must still be asked: should an organization whose leadership holds such views be a member of the American Jewish community's highest decision-making body?

PAUL FLACKS
Executive Vice President Emeritus
Zionist Organization of America
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . In his June Statement, Norman Podhoretz calls Jacob Amir's letter in that same issue "moving" and says that Mr. Amir "makes the case for Palestine statehood in a way that gives me pause and avoids lending aid and comfort to Israel's enemies." Having been a resident of Israel in 1951-52, and from 1954 to 1960, and as an avid reader of every news item during the pre-1967 period, I hereby attest to Jacob Amir's total memory loss.

Contrary to what he says, Israeli civilians did not live a remarkably normal life during this period, and the terrorist infiltration was most certainly not confined to the border moshavim and kibbutzim during this period. Terrorism was explosive and pervasive in most of Israel, ranging from attacks on civilian buses with multiple fatalities to the massacre of schoolchildren in the city of Lod near Tel Aviv and the firing on buses on the Petah Tikvah-Tel Aviv route. In the north of Israel, death and destruction rained down from the Golan Heights and from the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee.

All travel in the Negev (two-thirds of Israel's territory) was accompanied by armed escort or the mandatory carrying of weapons. . . .

As for the tranquility of Mr. Amir's post-midnight walks in Jerusalem "just a few yards from the border," his safety lay solely in the darkness of night because in daylight he could easily have become one of the victims of Jordanian Arab Legionnaires who were constantly firing on and, yes, killing and maiming Jews from the safety of their outposts on the Old City walls and their reinforced bunkers facing Jewish Jerusalem.

In fact, the overwhelming popularity of the Sinai campaign of 1956 lay in the absolute necessity to distance *fedayeen* terrorist squads from their access through the Gaza Strip. The formation of

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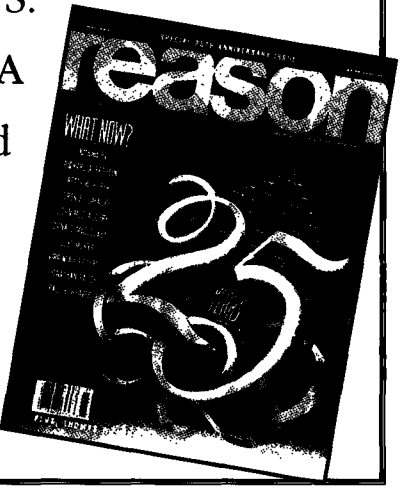

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the famed anti-terrorist commando unit headed by a young army officer named Ariel Sharon and the unprecedented latitude granted to it were motivated by the desperate need to reduce terrorism against the civilian Jewish population.

As for the peaceful Israeli Arabs in the fantasyland of Jacob Amir's pre-1967 Israel, I will make only two brief observations.

First and foremost, the government and army of Israel deemed it necessary to impose martial law on Israel's Arabs and maintain it for a number of years.

Secondly, I was in the audience during a speech made by David Ben-Gurion in which he emphatically stated that, given the opportunity, the Arabs of Israel would support any war dedicated to the destruction of Israel and would rather live under the iron fist of an Arab dictator than be ruled by democratic Jewish sovereignty. These remarks were duly reported in the next day's newspapers with little or no reaction.

Finally, if Mr. Amir intends to include Jerusalem in his fail-safe Jewish state, how does he intend to protect Jewish children from the stabbings in Jerusalem that he so poignantly described? The bulk of the hostile Palestinian population that he insists "Israel must separate itself from" lives both within or in very close proximity to that very Jerusalem.

If Mr. Amir has full confidence in the ability of Israel's army to protect the 1949 sieve-like armistice borders from hostile and "sworn-to-war" Arab nations hovering above and around it, plus an autonomous Palestinian state seething with hatred and determination to regain its "conquered land," why does he not find it possible for the army and the police and an alert, armed citizenry "to make the streets of its cities safe once again," those streets which at their very worst are far safer than the cities in which most Americans live?

DAVID HOROWITZ
Los Angeles, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Jacob Amir forgets that the peaceful days in Jerusalem in the 1950's that he describes in his letter were a fool's paradise. That idyllic "peace" was punctuated by the war of 1967, when the Arabs used the territories they had illegally seized to launch hostilities against Israel. This means that there are no "good old days" for Mr. Amir to go back to. The events of 1967 show that Arab enmity is not related to possession of the territories, but to the existence of Israel itself. The plain fact is that there is no peace that the Arabs have the capacity to deliver. . . .

The Arabs must never get a second chance to repeat 1967. Israel should under no circumstances go back to the vulnerabilities of its pre-1967 borders . . . which, at a minimum, must ultimately be annexed by Israel so that they will never play a role in any potential Arab attack. . . .

Mr. Amir worries about radicalizing the 900,000 Israeli Arabs. What will he say when they become 2,500,000 in a few short decades and show even less capacity for understanding the defense needs of the Jewish state? If those Arabs do not support action now to counteract potential dangers to the state, they must be written off and encouraged to leave, in the interest of preserving the lives of the 4.5 million-plus Jews. . . .

It is such facts that the Amirs do not wish to face. It is bizarre that they would trust agreements with the Arabs—trust to pieces of paper that history has shown to have had no efficacy—instead of demanding the objective condition of militarily secure borders, which is what all other nations of the world demand for themselves. . . .

I note that at least one observer, in a recent *New York Times* op-ed article, maintains that population transfer for the purpose of saving lives is a legitimate solution to the problems of Bosnia. It is even more valid in the case of Israel. There is no reason for Israel to risk its future or to apologize for taking the proper action to protect its people.

DAVID BASCH
West Hartford, Connecticut

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . The tragedy in Israel today is that there is essentially no difference between the Right and Left; both are motivated by fundamental selfishness for power. . . .

And, of course, dishonesty. The Left speaks of achieving peace by making insane concessions. The Right speaks of coexistence with the Arabs in our midst, and denies any demographic danger. Meanwhile, mention of the only real solution is prohibited and punishable.

DAVID FEIN
Scarsdale, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . All over the world ethnic cleansing seems to be the order of the day. In Germany we have xenophobia. In Japan ethnic cleansing has been in effect throughout the nation's history, since only ethnic Japanese can become citizens and even Koreans, who have lived in Japan for generations, are denied citizenship. England has had to limit the number of Pakistani immigrants. And in the former Soviet Union we are probably about to find the ultimate ethnic cleansing, with the various republics anxious to rid themselves of the Russians who had been sent among them to maintain Russian-Soviet hegemony. And we all know about Bosnia and the Sudan. . . .

Today Israel is at risk. Yet the entire world insists that Israel alone may not resort to the almost universal practice of ethnic cleansing. Israel's survival depends on guaranteeing its current boundaries. If possible, Israel should buy up the land owned by Israeli Arabs, or get the 22 Arab nations to welcome their co-religionists and rescue them from what they call the persecution they suffer in Israel. After all, Israel welcomed the unfortunate survivors of the Holocaust; why can't the Arabs be as hospitable to their own? Maybe Jordan, which is already 70-percent Palestinian, should set an example. . . .

Israel can survive only by an exchange of populations, which has already been done several times in the modern era. Half of this process has already been accomplished—there are almost no Jews left in Arab lands. I am waiting for the other shoe to drop.

JEROME GREENBLATT
Laguna Hills, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Four years ago, in his article "Israel: A Lamentation from the Future" [COMMENTARY, March 1989], Norman Podhoretz wrote: "It was therefore clear from the start of the U.S. dialogue with Arafat that it was likely to lead . . . to an American endorsement of a PLO state." Recent news seems to point to the accuracy of this prediction. Mr. Podhoretz's haunting article was written from an imaginary future

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in which Israel no longer existed. Though details of Israel's demise were left out, Mr. Podhoretz made it clear that what had happened was that both the well-meaning and the cynical were seduced by the idea of peace and made territorial concessions that left the state unable to defend itself. In his two Statements on the Peace Process, Mr. Podhoretz has only been pointing out that many of those who are now seduced by the idea of peace are in positions of power in Israel today. . . .

DAVID GERSTMAN
Baltimore, Maryland

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Reading Norman Podhoretz's penetrating though sobering "Statement on the Peace Process" (and the published comments on the article) brings to mind another article he wrote some time ago, "Israel: A Lamentation from the Future."

Has the "future" arrived?

MIRIAM DISKIND
Brooklyn, New York

NORMAN PODHORETZ writes:

Having gone around the track twice now in these pages, and a few more times in interviews with the press, on the issue of why and how I have violated my old rule of staying out of the debate over Israel's security, I am content to let my critics have their say without reiterating my position yet again. Nor do I have anything to add (except for my thanks) in response to the supporting letters on this particular issue. But Berel Lang raises an objection I have not adequately addressed before—an objection also raised by Abraham H. Foxman, the executive director of the ADL, in a piece published both in the *Jerusalem Post* and in a number of Anglo-Jewish papers here in the U.S.

Neither Mr. Lang nor Mr. Foxman is persuaded by my argument that to criticize the Rabin government for being too conciliatory, unlike the old left-wing attacks on the Shamir government for being intransigent and immoral, poses no political danger to Israel. How, asks Mr. Foxman, do I know what use will be made of my criticisms? And Mr. Lang, spelling out explicitly what Mr. Foxman only hints at, declares that I am "encouraging American pressure on Israel to prevent the concessions [I] oppose."

What world do these people live in? Can they really envisage a situation in which the Clinton administration would pressure Israel to make *fewer* concessions or to take a *tougher* line in negotiations with the Arabs?

There is, however, a more plausible variant of the idea that my criticisms of the peace process pose a political danger to Israel. According to this variant—which, I am reliably informed, has been put forward in private conversation by an Israeli diplomat in Washington and has also been alluded to in a story in the *Boston Globe*—the Rabin government might at some juncture want and need American pressure so that, in making concessions that would be very unpopular at home, it would be able to blame Washington for leaving Israel no alternative. But, said this diplomat, if Clinton were persuaded by outcries like mine that such pressure on Israel would be unpopular with American Jews as well, then he would be reluctant to apply it for fear of losing Jewish votes in 1996.

Well, if Israeli officials believe that the deal they are contemplating can only be rammed through their domestic opposition under cover of American pressure, then they are on even shakier ground than I thought.

Moving on now from the question of my right to participate in the debate, I want to return to the substantive issues involved in the peace process which are, after all, the true heart of the matter. Before doing so, however, let me just say that "transfer" or "ethnic cleansing"—the solution proposed in a number of letters above—is in my judgment so unrealistic that it is hardly worth discussing. Even setting aside the obvious moral objections to so repellent a policy, can anyone seriously imagine its being adopted by a country which cannot even expel a few terrorists without tearing itself apart and incurring the wrath of the entire world? And even if, in spite of these considerations, transfer were to be attempted, can anyone seriously imagine that it would be permitted to go forward without an all-out military assault against Israel by the Arabs, quite possibly with the support of the UN?

But back now to the peace process itself.

When I was in Jerusalem this past June, I gave a talk based on my two Statements. There were many doves in the audience, and during the lengthy question period they did not fail to tax me with being callous about the sufferings which would continue to afflict both the Israelis and the Palestinians in the absence of a peaceful settlement. I was also accused by Professor Shlomo Avineri (a former Director General of the Foreign Ministry) of being a Manichean, from which he concluded that I must be as wrong in my analysis of the Arab-Israeli conflict as, in his view, I had been about the U.S.-Soviet conflict. (To this I replied that in confronting evil—Nazi Germany, Soviet Communism, and the Arab dream of wiping Israel off the map—a Manichean was the only honorable thing to be, and that of course I had been right, not wrong, in my ideas about the cold war.)

Yet, astonishingly, in an hour-and-a-half of discussion, not only did it become apparent that the audience largely shared my doubts about the negotiations; it was also clear that the doves had nothing to say about the *content* of my analysis. That is, not a single person rose to argue that I had been mistaken on this or that detail of the Syrian position or the Palestinian position or even the position of the Rabin government. In fact, the only point that came seriously into dispute was my contention that the peace process is a trap from which Israel will find it very hard to escape without winding up weaker and more vulnerable to military assault.

Thus, Professor Yehoshua Porat of the Hebrew University, one of the leading academic authorities in Israel on the Arab world and a supporter of the leftist party Meretz (which is a member of Rabin's governing coalition), shook most of the audience by agreeing "100 percent" with my analysis. At the same time, however, he disagreed with me about the peace process. Israel must, he contended, go on negotiating, because (I quote from memory) "unless our sons are convinced that we are doing everything possible to make peace, they will jump out of the tanks in the next war."

My response was that if this was how young people in Israel actually felt, then they had been tragically miseducated to believe that it was up to their country to make peace when in truth only the Ar-

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abs could call off the war they had been waging against the Jewish state from the minute it came into existence. (I was later assured that only the children of doves, if even all of them, correspond to Porat's description.)

I tell this story by way of confirming and adding to Kenneth Levin's illuminating description of his encounter in Boston with a visiting Israeli dove. Yet even if I had not had this experience in Jerusalem, I would by now have known from the critical letters I have received (including, with all due respect, the one from Shlomo Gazit that appears above), as well as from articles in the public prints, that the position of the doves is based on little more than wishful thinking about the Arabs and about the terms they are willing to accept.

Just how wishful, so far as the Syrians are concerned, can be gauged from what Yigal Carmon tells us in his important letter about their intransigence. Furthermore, the Syrians, having turned down an Israeli request to disarm Hezbollah, then used it as a proxy for attacking Israeli soldiers in Lebanon and Israeli civilians in the Galilee, thereby provoking the retaliatory strikes of late July.

As for the Palestinians, they now insist not only on pushing Jerusalem to the top of the negotiating agenda but on making the "return" of East Jerusalem a condition for going on with the process. It is hard to know what this means. Are the Palestinians once again resuming their old habit of never missing an opportunity to miss an opportunity? Or do they believe that the Rabin government is so desperate for a deal that even East Jerusalem is now up for grabs?

If the Palestinians do believe this, and if it should turn out that they are right in believing it, then I would no longer be inclined to characterize a letter like the one from E.B. Ayal as overly harsh. To be sure, these are very big ifs indeed. Yet as Paul Flacks points out in his letter about the admission of Americans for Peace Now to the Presidents' Conference, the solid front that used to exist on Jerusalem is already beginning to crack (and not only, I might add, among American Jews, but also on the Israeli Left).

On the other hand, I have discovered from the response to my two Statements that the fears and anxieties which led me to go public are very widely shared. It is also clear that they are not being allayed by the distressingly weak arguments put forward by the Rabin government and its apologists in defense of a strategy that looks less and less realistic and more and more dangerous (see David Bar-Illan's powerful piece beginning on p. 27 below for the details).

Clintonism

To the Editor of Commentary:

I have just read Irwin M. Stelzer's outstanding article, "Clintonism Unmasked" [May], and wanted to thank him for laying out a comprehensive and succinct outline of what the Clinton administration is trying to do.

I agree with Mr. Stelzer that the core Clinton philosophy is "a collectivist faith in the state as the source and fount of economic vitality and social health." It is astounding to me that only in Pyongyang, Havana, and Washington does this philosophy hold any credibility. The defeat of the Clinton "stimulus" package is at least a step in the right direction; but, as Mr. Stelzer concludes, "it will be a tough four years."

[Senator] Phil Gramm
United States Senate
Washington, D.C.

To the Editor of Commentary:

Not only do I disagree with Irwin M. Stelzer in most respects, but I am disappointed that Commentary would make such an anti-intellectual, tendentious article its lead, with a pejorative title that suggests an underlying conspiracy to which Mr. Stelzer apparently believes the President, his wife, his cabinet, and his advisers are parties.

Without writing an article of the same length, it is impossible to deal properly with Mr. Stelzer's exaggerations and obsessions. Without more content, one cannot evaluate his accusation that Mrs. Clinton desires "a radical reordering of society." Without a disclosure of his sources, one cannot determine the validity of his statement that the President's first act was "to appoint the most socially radical cabinet his wife could propose." Without some hint of a definition, one cannot accept or refute that word "radical," much less the charge that the President is a "daring radical" with "a deep ideological commitment to radical change."

Mr. Stelzer does offer some clues. He thinks it "radical" to end the gag rule on abortion advice. He thinks it "radical" to end the requirement that a volunteer for service in the armed forces must disclose his or her sexual orientation, although everyone, starting with the President, has made it clear that improper conduct on the part of a member of the armed forces would be grounds for discharge. But except for the elimination of the sexual-orientation question, that has precisely been the status of homosexuals in the armed forces, and no one has denied that there have been homosexuals in the military who have served with distinction. The question only served as the basis for discharge when there was no conduct which would justify it.

Mr. Stelzer finds sufficient ground for all this in the fact that Mr. Clinton has, directly or indirectly, received the advice of "several economists and political scientists" in a number of universities. If he named them, one could decide whether or not his concerns were justified. Instead, his attack is *ad academiam*. The references to Cambridge and Berkeley are something less than subtle. This may be the first time a presumably serious article disparaged economists because they were Nobel laureates, a position hardly strengthened by referring to a "bevy" of them with "hundreds of their acolytes." That is simply anti-intellectualism.

Mr. Stelzer's attitude approaches hysteria. It has been understood since this republic was founded that elected representatives do not simply reflect the wishes of their constituencies, or at least a majority of them. They are supposed to lead and educate as well, to understand the best interests of their constituents and not merely to seek their immediate gratification. But Mr. Stelzer thinks this is to "reengineer society," and he calls it "collectivist," more words without content. He finds an example of this in suggestions that greater use be made of mass transit. He seems to think objections to the takeover excesses of the 80's are based on the fact that the companies that were taken over were "highly unionized."

Mr. Stelzer finds nothing about the twelve years of unchecked defi-

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cit spending to criticize, except perhaps that Lloyd Bentsen and Leon Panetta participated in it. (I gather it is wrong—or radical—to believe that too little was spent on infrastructure and that too much was spent on selfish consumption.) He is already against the health-care bill which has yet to be presented, although the need for reducing the growth of health-care costs and extending insurance coverage has substantial support on all sides of the political spectrum and is a major concern of large and small businesses.

Perhaps the key to Mr. Stelzer's thinking is his belief that Ronald Reagan's main achievement—by cutting taxes, raising defense spending, and running large deficits—lay in preventing the Democrats from introducing new social proposals or expanding old ones.

This is not the "serious conservative opposition" which I look for COMMENTARY's contributors to provide.

ROBERT H. HAINES
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his article, "Clintonism Unmasked," Irwin M. Stelzer reveals Clintonomics to be a battle for more collectivism. He argues that President Clinton's redistribution of wealth and the decline of the gross domestic product (GDP) under collectivism will cause general distress and that Clinton will relieve this distress for favored client/voters. Clinton's purpose is the realization of a vision he shares with his teachers, the empowering of "feminists, homosexuals, minorities, and the various beneficiaries of the welfare state."

So far, so good. Mr. Stelzer errs, however, in his portrayal of anti-Clintonism. He calls in Irving Kristol to tell us once again that the battle for the culture is already lost. Since it is lost, Mr. Stelzer maintains, the anti-Clinton middle class is being offered the hard choice of either accepting the culture of its opponents or of being excluded from the groups which are favored and thus suffering economic privation.

When President Bush told us that candidate Clinton had a bad character, he spoke in a language different from Mr. Stelzer's. In Mr. Stelzer's more modish vernacular, Clinton's favorites are accused not of bad character but of representing an ideology—they prefer a different kind of "culture." By using this modish vernacular, Mr. Stelzer avoids offending fashionable intellectuals, for it is notoriously out of style to take seriously anyone who, either deliberately or implicitly, rejects historical progressivism and its fellow traveler, moral relativism.

This concession to the notion that culture can be changed independently of ethical consequences is what throws Mr. Stelzer off the track. He makes a mistake in trying to accommodate the Clinton alternative to the world of constitutional republicanism. For this mental sleight-of-hand requires the assumption (one made by too many conservatives) that American constitutionalism is dedicated to nothing higher than commercialism. . . .

As Mr. Stelzer's analysis is very helpful in clarifying, Clintonism unmasked is nothing more than intellectualism unmasked, an intellectualism whose salient feature is not sober thought but frenzied utopianism. The inaugural offering of Clinton's poet for America, Maya Angelou, amply illustrates this, celebrating an idyllic barbarism in the same way in which it lauds the most artificially contrived "life styles." . . .

I am far more optimistic than Mr. Stelzer. Conservatives *can* succeed with the workable strategy of hammering home to the voters the danger Clintonism represents: the danger not to middle-class culture, but to America.

DAVID BROYLES
Wake Forest University
Winston-Salem, North Carolina

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Irwin M. Stelzer's assessment of Clinton's economic success seems to focus largely on the present administration's put-down of the triumphs of the Reagan years. Actually, however, only a tortured view of Reagan's economic "plan" could lead one to describe the Great Communicator's term in office as a planned economic boom.

Anyone who still has copies of the Republican literature of those years can look back and see that faulty economic conditions were blamed on, among other things,

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the existence of the minimum wage and the costliness of labeling the ingredients in food products. The "plan" itself was variously termed "Reaganomics," "trickle-down theory," "supply-side economics," "the new federalism," and, of course, "voodoo economics" by then-candidate George Bush. Ronald Reagan, after all, faced the very same Democratic Congress that is now still largely in office. Since all economic bills must begin in Congress, why should Reagan have taken credit for any economic success that took place during those years?

Mr. Stelzer's article cites the number of jobs created, the thriving economy, and the positive outlook of the Reagan years and attributes them all to Reagan's policies. Yet how realistic could all these achievements have been when they no longer existed only two years after he left office? The deficit grew from $500 billion to $4 trillion during the Reagan-Bush years. Since Republicans, as we know, are not advocates of a "tax-and-spend" policy, could it be that these two Presidents encouraged a "spend-and-spend" policy?

Finally, the issue of taxes. Ronald Reagan enacted and signed into law the Internal Revenue Act of 1986, which was the single biggest tax increase in this nation's history. Yet he was *still* able to accomplish all of the miracles detailed in Mr. Stelzer's article!

It often seems to me that strict conservatives wear rose-colored glasses which haven't been cleaned in years. Had Mr. Stelzer looked at Ronald ("I just don't remember") Reagan more realistically, he might view Clinton in a somewhat more positive light.

ARTHUR S. GREEBLER
Far Rockaway, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Irwin M. Stelzer's article is an important contribution to the global economic debate that has emerged with the collapse of Communism. Mr. Stelzer makes it painfully obvious that the philosophical underpinnings of the Clinton administration are corporatist and elitist, a combination that is antithetical to democratic capitalism. Where Francis Fukuyama had seen an end of history, because capitalism had triumphed over Communism, the fact remains that corporatism—which we used to call fascism—has never been defeated as an organizing principle. . . .

The term fascism was coined in Italy in 1919 to describe a system of political economy in which the best and the brightest of government, business, and labor would join together for the common good to guide the nation. The symbol was a bundle of sticks bound together.

The idea of elitist rule is as old as Plato's philosopher-kings. In the modern world, it is built on the assumption that political markets and economic markets are not perfectly efficient. If this is true, wise men must be granted special authority to be able to offset the flaws in these markets by direct action. Modern fascism, as propounded by the political and economic theoreticians who exist in both the Democratic and Republican parties, embraces bigger government with enhanced centrist powers. It is "republican" in that it is suspicious of democracy. It is, as Mr. Stelzer points out, "communitarian" at the expense of the individual. . . .

Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal was largely patterned after the fascist success in Italy. The stock-market crash of 1929 and the Great Depression that followed seemed sufficient evidence of imperfect markets and the breakdown of laissez-faire capitalism. A larger role for government as an industrial planner, designed by FDR's "brain trust," was the forerunner of Bill Clinton's blueprint for economic growth. . . .

President Clinton is a "new Democrat" insofar as he and his team advance efficiency arguments that "old Democrats" eschewed. To a Paul Samuelson or a James Tobin or a Robert Solow, economic weakness was sufficient reason to have government merely tax and spend, even if this meant "digging holes and filling them up" to create government jobs. There is at least the pretense with the new administration of seeking government investment of taxpayer resources that will have a positive return. Hence the change of slogan to "tax and invest."

Those of us who still believe markets are efficient, and therefore opt for the individual entrepreneur as the basic economic unit, also tend to believe that the political market is efficient, i.e., that more democracy is preferable to less. . . . Autocrats and oligarchs can seem to be more efficient over a short stretch of track, but history reminds us again and again that the collective wisdom of ordinary people is superior over an extended track. Aesop's fable of the tortoise and the hare is an appropriate celebration of democracy.

Ordinary people, especially minorities, do not fare well under fascist regimes, especially when there is economic contraction and resultant political distress—as in the 1930's. America's democratic institutions placed a check on the tendencies of the Roosevelt administration to overreach itself, for example with FDR's attempt to pack the Supreme Court. In Nazi Germany, the exemplar of fascist principles carried to extremes, the state had sufficient power simply to eliminate entirely what it felt to be its most distasteful minorities.

In wartime, even in a democracy like the United States, the people will give their elites a wider margin to make spot decisions that would not be permissible in peacetime. This gives rise to a natural tendency among elites to encourage or even invite emergency situations, at home and abroad. It was this phenomenon that President Eisenhower had in mind when he warned against the military-industrial complex.

There are now elements of our society which were conditioned for a wartime footing that seem to be resisting a return to normalcy after the end of the cold war. Some of the initial appeal of the candidacy of Ross Perot among ordinary people last year surely had to do with his assaults on the "Beltway establishment." Perot promised more democracy, with electronic town halls, direct involvement of grass-roots America in the decisions of government, and a return to the simplicity of a peacetime tax system.

Because America is blessed with democratic institutions, it will only be a matter of time before the people find the leaders who will extend and realize this promise. By trial and error, with an open mind, President Clinton may himself move in that direction. At the moment, though, Irwin M. Stelzer and COMMENTARY are on the mark. Clinton was elected President having promised the people what he believed they wanted to hear, but once in power he decided he and his Oxford friends knew better

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than plain folks what they need, for their own good.

JUDE WANNISKI
Polyconomics, Inc.
Morristown, New Jersey

IRWIN M. STELZER writes:

I can assure David Broyles that I had no desire to "avoid offending fashionable intellectuals." Or "to accommodate the Clinton alternative to the world of constitutional republicanism." Or to celebrate Maya Angelou's poetry. And I have no objection if Mr. Broyles prefers to characterize Clintonism as a "danger" to America rather than, as he thinks I argued, to middle-class culture. But he might want to consider the fact that America is a great, big, resilient country which has survived a lot worse than Bill Clinton, whereas it is not so clear that "middle-class culture," to use Mr. Broyles's term, is strong enough to survive the attack of the now-empowered 1960's children-grown-to-personhood.

In contrast to Mr. Broyles, who feels I somehow bend the knee to "intellectuals," we have Robert H. Haines, who accuses me of "anti-intellectualism." Before I turn to Mr. Haines's peculiar interpretations of my article, let me dispose of a few of his lesser criticisms. He says I failed to name the economists who influenced President Clinton. Look again. I specifically cite Robert Reich, Lester Thurow, and James Tobin. He says I "disparaged economists because they were Nobel laureates." Hardly. In my piece I credit them with knowing that Clinton's record tax increases will not balance the budget, and with developing a strategy for dealing with that problem. I agree with their conclusion that the deficit will burgeon, but disagree with their proposed solution. If that is "disparagement," so be it.

On to more serious matters. Mr. Haines's reading of my piece is heavily influenced by his disinclination to consult his dictionary. He thinks "collectivist" is a "word without content." Would that it were. To most people it means substituting group—usually government—decision-making for individual actions. Example: raising taxes so that more of society's income is spent on things the collective thinks people should have than on things individuals would buy were they allowed to retain that portion of their earnings. Example: forcing people to purchase health-care services through large collectives.

Mr. Haines also accuses me of failing to provide "some hint of a definition" of the word "radical." I am sure his *Oxford English Dictionary* will tell him, as mine does me, that radical means ". . . touching or acting upon what is essential and fundamental; . . . advocating . . . any thorough political change." Surely this represents not only my description of the Clintons, but their own. In "A Vision of Change for America," submitted to Congress on February 17, 1993 along with his State of the Union address, President Clinton refers to "My vision . . . of fundamental change" and the need "to reject convention. . . ." Note: nothing in my article suggests that radical change is necessarily bad. Radical, in short, is descriptive, not pejorative. My worry is with the direction of Clinton's radicalism. Unlike Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher, whose radicalism led them to reduce the role of government in American and British life, Clinton's radicalism requires its increase—to control pharmaceutical prices, to manage trade, to build "information highways . . . industrial parks" and other infrastructure. If this does not constitute "thorough political change," to hark back to the dictionary meaning of "radical," it is hard to imagine what does.

And if the President does not agree that his policy of appointing lesbians to key posts and legitimizing gays in the military is radical, I would be quite surprised. Radical, he might say, but good policy. Radical, Patrick J. Buchanan would say, but bad policy. The question is not, then, whether I am right in terming these policies radical. It is whether, being clearly radical, they move the country in the right direction.

And that is where Mr. Haines most seriously misunderstands me. My view is that some of the President's radical policies are bad, others are good, and still others must be classed as "too early to tell." But their true nature was masked from the electorate during the campaign, and is only now coming clearly into view.

Which brings me to Mr. Haines's strange notion that the

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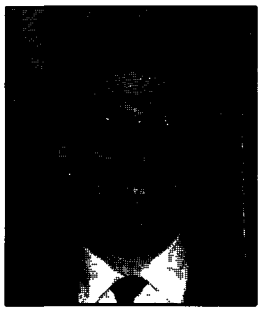

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title "Clintonism Unmasked" "suggests an underlying conspiracy" involving Mrs. Clinton, the cabinet, and a host of others. Far from it. Candidate Clinton donned the mask of a "new Democrat," favoring lower taxes for the middle class and a reduction in "the size and cost of government." President Clinton doffed the mask candidate Clinton had donned—all by himself. No conspiracy required. So my title is apt but, alas, not original. Britain's *Spectator* magazine was the first to refer to Clinton "unmasking himself," as I note in my article.

Arthur S. Greebler's intense dislike of Ronald Reagan leads him to assign credit for "any economic success that took place during those [Reagan] years" to the Democratic Congress. A full answer would require more space than I have, so I refer Mr. Greebler to Robert L. Bartley's piece in COMMENTARY of March 1992. I refer him as well to the twenty million new jobs created in the 80's, without inflation and while winning the cold war.

Finally, let me thank Jude Wanniski for adding to the discussion.

Russian Jews

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Thank you for publishing "Are Russian Jews in Danger?" by Peter Brodsky [May], which focuses once again on the condition of the Jews in Russia. As the author correctly indicates, this topic has practically disappeared from the pages of the American press. As a result, the notion now prevails that Jews are no longer persecuted in Russia. Unfortunately, this is not correct.

In August 1991, Russia was on the brink of a fascist takeover. The leaders of the coup who arrested Gorbachev and proclaimed a state of emergency had no intention of restoring the Communist regime. Their "Appeal to the People"—the only official document they published—does not make use of the usual Communist rhetoric about the class struggle, the dictatorship of the proletariat, international solidarity of the workers, etc., etc. Instead, it repeats the word "Fatherland" seven times and claims that the state of emergency was necessary to defend the country against unidentified "enemies." In Russian political jargon this means the establishment of a new totalitarian regime based on Nazi-like (they call it "national patriotic") ideology. That is why the plotters were actively supported by anti-Semitic groups of "patriots" together with hard-line Communists.

The failure of the coup left the Communists as well as the "national patriots" in disarray. After his victory, Boris Yeltsin banned the Communist party as a criminal organization. But though he dealt a heavy blow to the "Reds," Yeltsin did not act so decisively with the "Browns." Many of your readers probably recall Yeltsin's and Gorbachev's joint interview a week after the coup, which was broadcast all over the world. When Yeltsin was asked what measures he was planning to take against the anti-Semitic organization Pamyat, he replied that some positive changes were taking place within the organization, that it was becoming more moderate, and would eventually turn democratic. In saying this, Yeltsin, ironically enough, was giving the same answer that Vladimir Kryuchkov, chief of the KGB and one of the organizers of the coup, had given two months earlier in response to a similar question. Yeltsin's statement was clearly taken as a signal by the foes of democracy, who have now come together in a "Red-Brown" (as it is called in Russia) united front. . . .

Democratization in Russia would have led to the dissolution of the Communist empire in any case, but Yeltsin speeded up the process artificially. The population was unprepared for such a rapid turn of events, compounded by the general sense of disappointment when the hoped-for economic reform failed to materialize and living standards continued to decline. All this proved a great boon to the "national patriots" who seized the opportunity to promote their favorite idea: that the Jews were responsible, not just for the decline of the country and its economy, but also for all the sufferings endured by the Soviet people during the years of Communist slavery. . . . What is especially remarkable is that Boris Yeltsin has never once in the course of his presidency publicly condemned anti-Semitism.

Mr. Brodsky provides a list of 30 anti-Semitic newspapers and magazines, but leaves out a number of periodicals which specialize in the propaganda of Russian Nazism and anti-Semitism, such as *Molodaya Gvardia* and *Nash Sovremennik* (monthlies); *Literaturnaya Rossia* (weekly); and *Sovetskaya Rossia* (daily). Now *Pravda* can also be added to the list, thanks to an article published there on May 5, 1993, claiming that secret Jewish and Masonic "sects," guided by secret religious texts, have been practicing ritual murder and human sacrifice for thousands of years. The article even refers to top-secret KGB documents alleging that "45 to 50 people die every year in Russia for unknown reasons, with evidence of ritual torture on their bodies." For the past few years the Russian anti-Semitic press has been attempting to revive the medieval blood libel against the Jews. The *Pravda* article differs from its predecessors only insofar as the examples are drawn not from history, but from a contemporary murder case (of three Russian Orthodox monks) that took place in April of this year.

In the past, inflammatory articles like these led to bloody pogroms, like the infamous Kishinev pogrom of 1903. But while pogroms of the old type would be impossible in the Russia of today, since the Jewish population is so dispersed that there are no Jewish neighborhoods left, mini-pogroms are going on constantly. According to information received by the United Councils for Soviet Jews, 45 violent anti-Semitic attacks which left fifteen people dead took place in the first three months of this year in the northeastern region of the country alone. When Jews ask for police protection, the response is usually that the police do not have the means to defend themselves, let alone the Jews. Thus the only way Jews can defend themselves in Russia these days is to hide their identity.

Today, the authorities do not forbid Jews to practice their religion or to study their language and culture, which is definitely a positive development compared to the Brezhnev years. But this has not increased Jewish security at all. On the contrary, it makes Jews more noticeable, and hence more vulnerable.

The West has been demanding free emigration for Soviet Jews and now that there are a lot fewer obstacles to their departure, we are inclined to be satisfied. We try not to notice the fact that the liberalization of the emigration policy under Gorbachev and Yeltsin does

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not resemble the freedom of movement for which the West fought. Russian Jews now have an easier time if they wish to leave their country, but less security if they prefer to stay. In contemporary political parlance, such "freedom of emigration" is called ethnic cleansing.

SEMYON REZNIK
Washington, D.C.

PETER BRODSKY writes:

I am very gratified to read Semyon Reznik's letter and the wealth of additional information he has supplied. Frankly, I was not certain how my article would be received. I did not doubt the validity of my sources of information or the nature of the vicious anti-Semitic rhetoric of the newspapers from which I quoted, but I have found it very difficult to convince most Americans (and American Jews) that the problem is real. This skepticism extends to official Israeli positions as well. When I began to research the American and Israeli perspective on contemporary Russian anti-Semitism, I was told flatly by a high-ranking Israeli official that "anti-Semitism in Russia today is a non-issue." I met with a similar response on the part of several official American Jewish groups. Typically, the attitude I encountered was that Russian Jews are not, in fact, at risk because if they were, they would all go to Israel. The naiveté of this position is startling and dismaying, especially when put in the context of current Israeli social, economic, and political strife. One can only speculate sadly about the underlying reasons for these attitudes.

American Jews, in my opinion, should do more to help Russian Jews get out of Russia. Put bluntly, American Jews should work harder to modify current American immigration policy with regard to Russian Jews, which, as I understand it, allows for 40,000 immigrants annually, but only if they have a "first-class" relative now living in the United States.

There are two basic reasons for my position on Russian Jewish immigration:

1. Russian society as a whole (as opposed to individual Russians) has always been, is now, and will remain hostile to Jews. In my opinion, the Hasidim who have established summer camps and religious day schools in Russia are doing great harm in attempting to create the appearance of normality and toleration by forcing a religious and ethnic revival. As a Russian friend of mine with a seven-year-old child said to me: "I would never dream of putting my son in a Hebrew day school, and I tell my friends not even to think of it. Why should I—so that my son will be marked for life and become even more of a target?" Religious fanatics may want to attempt this, but the majority of Russian Jews will undoubtedly act as my friend has, to protect their children.

2. The generation of Jews now in their thirties and forties in Russia may still be somewhat connected to a Jewish tradition and sense of Jewish heritage through their parents who are in their seventies and eighties. Their children, however, know even less than their parents, and for all intents and purposes will be lost forever to the Jewish people. If, indeed, there are close to 1.6 million Jews still residing in the lands of the former Soviet Union (a figure supplied to me as an official Israeli estimate), that loss will be significant and tragic.

I have only one slight correction to make to Mr. Reznik's letter. I did not cite 30 magazines and newspapers—only eighteen. This was intended as a sample only and that from Moscow alone. I have no idea how many other such publications exist throughout all of Russia. My guess is many more than 30.

Correction

In the July Letters from Readers, a portion of James W. Hamilton's letter on Sam Tanenhaus's article, "Hiss: Guilty as Charged" (April), was inadvertently garbled in the editing. Instead of the material on page 6 beginning ". . . Chambers said that when he made his final break" and ending "which he insisted took place after the break," the passage should read as follows:

> Chambers told the FBI in early 1949: "I planned to break with the Communist party simply by not showing up at my next meeting with Boris Bykov [his supposed Russian superior]. . . . I found a house on Old Court Road near Pikesville, Maryland. This house was owned by a Mr. Buck. . . . Shortly before my meeting with Bykov, I moved my family to a room which we had rented in the Buck residence. There we lived for probably a month. I failed to keep my last meeting with Bykov and made my definite break." In testifying during one of Hiss's perjury trials, Chambers gave essentially the same account. Had Chambers wanted to pin down the exact time of his break, he could have done so without too much difficulty using an ad he had placed to sublet an apartment on Mount Royal Terrace in Baltimore he had occupied before he left it for Old Court Road and contacts he had with Oxford University Press in New York about some translation work, which Chambers insisted took place after the break.
>
> —ED.

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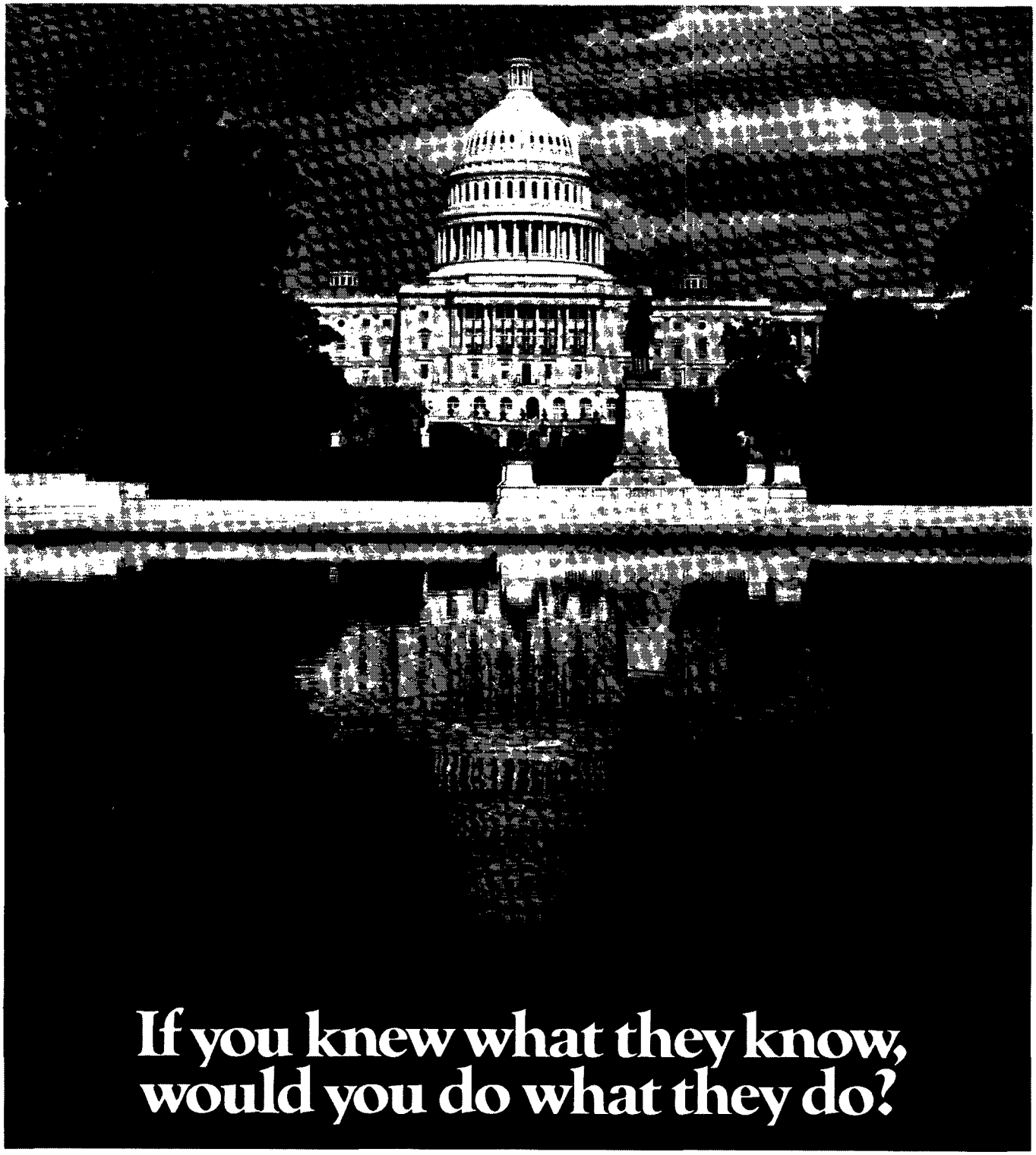

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Israel's New Pollyannas

David Bar-Illan

UNTIL recently, it was not difficult to define the main obstacle to a peace agreement between Arabs and Israelis: the very minimum the Syrians and Palestinians could accept exceeded the maximum Israel could give. In practical terms this meant that since Hafez al-Assad's Syria could accept no less than what Anwar Sadat's Egypt received—every inch of land lost to the Israelis in war—and since Israel could not afford to relinquish all this land (which would bring the border to within yards of the Sea of Galilee), an agreement with Syria was impossible.

Similarly, no Palestinian leader could accept anything less than total Israeli withdrawal to the 1949 armistice lines (usually described as the 1967 borders) and the establishment of a Palestinian state with the eastern half of Jerusalem as its capital, while no Israeli government could allow this to happen. Ergo, the prospects of a Palestinian-Israeli agreement were nonexistent.

All the procedural arguments—the Arabs' insistence on an international conference rather than direct talks, for instance—were merely a function of these differences. The Arabs, correctly assuming that Israel—no matter who was in the government—would not deliver their minimal demands, saw in a UN-sponsored conference a venue in which the world tribunal would impose an unpalatable settlement on Israel.

That is why the Madrid conference of 1991 was considered a small miracle. Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and the Palestinians actually sat down to negotiate in bilateral, direct talks. This, despite the fact that the then-Israeli government was a hawkish Likud-led coalition, headed by the stubborn Yitzhak Shamir, and that to expect it to bend to Palestinian demands for sovereignty in Judea, Samaria, and Gaza, or to accept Syrian claims to all of the Golan Heights, was ludicrous.

But the meeting took place at least partly because it was conceived in deception. In secret private letters, the Bush administration was able to convince each participant that the U.S. would support its position. Thus, Syria was promised that the American (and Soviet) sponsors of the talks would not only play an important mediating role when it mattered, but that Washington saw "the return of territories according to [UN] Resolutions 242 and 338"—a formula which to the Arabs translated into total withdrawal—as applicable to the Golan.

Similarly, the U.S. assured the Palestinians that it was still committed to the general outline of the Rogers plan of 1969, which called for virtually complete Israeli withdrawal to the 1949 armistice lines, and that it considered the Israeli annexation of the eastern part of Jerusalem illegal. In the eyes of the U.S., the Palestinians were reminded, east Jerusalem was still "occupied territory." (As it happens, even west Jerusalem has not been recognized by the U.S. as part of Israel.) The message was unmistakable: the U.S. would support the establishment of a Palestinian homeland in the territories with east Jerusalem as its capital. Indeed, for the first time since 1967, an American administration refused Israel's request to say that it actively opposed a Palestinian state.

To assuage Israel's fears of American support for a Palestinian state, however, the Bush administration specifically agreed to exclude the PLO from the negotiating process, and to insist on a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation, thus eliminating any semblance of a separate, independent Palestinian entity. Israel also received a commitment that only inhabitants of the territories could become delegates to the talks. That is, neither residents of Jerusalem nor members of the Palestinian "diaspora" would be eligible.

Furthermore, Israel was assured that the U.S. stood by President Ford's commitment to "give weight" to Israel's security concerns in the Golan Heights, that the Jerusalem question would be raised only at a later stage of the negotiations, and that the negotiations would be based on the Camp David formula. This meant an interim period of Palestinian autonomy for five years, with negotiations for a permanent solution beginning after the third year. All options would be left open—including the possibility of an Israeli demand for sovereignty over the territories.

THESE assurances to the various parties were clearly irreconcilable. Charitably, they were white lies intended to get everyone

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together in the hope that differences would be ironed out at the negotiating table. A more cynical interpretation would characterize them as a stratagem designed to create an irresistible momentum which would force Israel to yield to the prevailing world demand for total withdrawal. Either way, then-Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir did not appreciate their import. When asked about the American assurances to the Arabs, he said Israel was not bound by American promises. All that mattered was that the talks were bilateral and direct, and that the U.S. would not interfere.

But conflicting promises have a way of exploding. On the very first day of the Madrid conference, the Palestinian representatives, who were supposed to be included in the Jordanian delegation, were allotted the same space at the table as the other delegations and allowed a separate time slot for their addresses. Armed with American support for them as a distinct delegation, they stalled the negotiations for months until the Israelis yielded. Washington also allowed Faisal Husseini, a resident of Jerusalem and a member of Yasir Arafat's Fatah (and therefore doubly ineligible for participation), to head an "advisory team" attached to the delegation. He and the team's spokeswoman, Hanan Ashrawi, promptly became the most sought-after stars of the peace talks. The Jordanian delegation faded into the background.

In addition, the Bush administration circumvented the ban on the PLO by letting senior PLO figures enter the U.S. for the post-Madrid negotiations in Washington. Setting up shop in the delegates' hotel, they were ostentatiously consulted by the official Palestinian participants before and after every session. The commitment to exclude "diaspora" Palestinians was also broken, when Mohammad Khalaj, a member of the Palestine National Council who lives in America, was included in the negotiations on refugees at the multilateral talks on regional problems. And the final obliteration of the American commitment to exclude the PLO and Jerusalem residents came when Israel (now led by Yitzhak Rabin) agreed, as part of the deal with the U.S. (now led by Bill Clinton) following the expulsion of 400 Hamas agitators, to the formal recognition of Husseini as head of the Palestinian delegation.*

BUT far more disturbing than the American manipulations were those practiced by the Israeli government itself. For some three years the Syrians had been spreading the word that Assad had had a change of heart. Having lost the sponsorship of the Soviets, he purportedly now realized that he would never achieve strategic parity with Israel—a euphemism for a military capability which would enable him to vanquish Israel alone. Forced to get closer to the West to survive, and aware that the West wanted peace, he was ready to sign an agreement with Israel.

This line was startlingly similar to the argument made in 1990 by Saddam Hussein and *his* supporters in the West and in Israel. (Among those convinced at the time that Saddam was so eager to curry favor with the West that he would be a natural candidate for a peace treaty with Israel was Ezer Weizman, now Israel's President.) That Saddam himself proved the fallacy of the argument—he not only betrayed his promises but started a war without Soviet backing—seemed to be forgotten.

President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, who weeks before the invasion of Kuwait had assured Israel of Saddam's benignity, was credited both with persuading Assad of the advantages of peace and with convincing the U.S. that the Syrian dictator was sincere. As Egypt had discovered, lost land could be retrieved from Israel more easily through peace than by war. And Assad, a reputed pragmatist who had repeatedly vowed to destroy Israel if it took 200 years, now saw that sitting with Israel at the negotiating table made sense. True, to mitigate the implied recognition of the Jewish state the Syrians insisted on calling the negotiations an international conference, but in reality they agreed to participate in strictly bilateral talks.

The Syrians at first found the role of peace partners a little unnatural. But eager to get their country off the State Department list of states which sponsor terrorism, they even chimed in with a confidence-building measure, allowing the gradual emigration of Syrian Jews, provided they did not go to Israel. And as soon as the Israeli delegation, under the Labor government, announced Israel's readiness to withdraw from the Golan Heights, they switched from displays of cold fury to smiles and handshakes. These prompted the new Israeli Foreign Minister, Shimon Peres, to proclaim that the developments in Damascus were nothing short of sensational.

What the Syrians made clear, however, was that they expected the negotiations to bring nothing less than full Israeli withdrawal not only from the Golan Heights—small in area but strategically vital for the defense of Israel's north—but from all areas occupied by Israel in 1967 and 1982. This meant the complete evacuation of Judea, Samaria, Gaza, east Jerusalem, and the security belt in Lebanon.

Nor was Syria willing to sign a full-fledged peace treaty in return. It interpreted Resolution 242 to mean that Israel must withdraw from *all*

* Predictably, this made the Palestinians assume they could bring up the matter of Jerusalem immediately, rather than at the negotiations on the permanent solution. This in turn caused an impasse in the negotiations which prompted the Clinton administration to send a diplomatic team headed by Dennis Ross to Israel to reconcile PLO and Israeli positions.

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captured territory on *all* fronts (a transparently false reading) and that in return Israel was entitled to nothing more than an end to the state of belligerency which did not include a peace treaty and normalization of relations.

Though aware of the Syrian position, Rabin—who a day before the election had said that anyone abandoning the Golan Heights would be guilty of forsaking Israel's security—predicted that "within months" Israel and Syria would sign on the dotted line. Members of the cabinet, including Police Minister Moshe Shahal who was known for his closeness to Rabin, openly advocated relinquishing the entire Golan.

To be sure, Rabin himself kept stressing that he would consider withdrawing only *on* the Golan Heights, not *from* them. But he kept all options open by allowing that the extent of withdrawal depended on the quality of peace Syria was prepared to offer. This was generally understood to mean that for a full-fledged peace treaty, which would include an exchange of ambassadors and a free flow of people and goods between the two countries, Rabin would forfeit Israeli sovereignty in the Golan and effect a gradual but complete withdrawal. In that case, leaks from government offices averred, to ensure against Syrian aggression, Rabin would insist that the area be demilitarized and the U.S. station troops between Syrians and Israelis.

Rabin's "you tell me first what kind of peace you want and I'll tell you how much land I'll give" created the impression that the Syrians had not made their position clear. Yet soon after the resumption of negotiations under the Labor government, the Syrian delegation submitted a document summarizing its position. It indicated that Damascus had not budged an inch from its insistence on total Israeli withdrawal to the 1949 armistice lines on all fronts, and that in return it was willing to commit to no more than a state of nonbelligerency.

This document so disappointed the Israeli government that it asked the Syrian delegation not to publish it, a request which may have constituted a historic first: a democratic government asking a dictatorial regime to keep an exchange secret for fear that the information would adversely affect public opinion. To this day, the only open source of the document's contents is the Arab press to which it was leaked by the Syrians. Israel has yet to release it.*

THIS, however, was a relatively minor episode in a much more elaborate effort by the Israeli government—one in which the press collaborated—to sell Assad not only as a leader who needed and wanted peace but as a man of honor. The evidence for this, said ministers and columnists, was there for all to see: the separation agreement on the Golan Heights, which had been observed by Syria for twenty years (with the exception of a few forays by terrorists, for which the Syrians were not held responsible). Assad might be a ruthless dictator, but his signature on a contract would be binding.

Forgotten were a few pertinent facts. The reason the Syrians have been careful not to provoke the Israelis on the Golan Heights is that the Israeli army there is within striking distance of Damascus. In Lebanon, where Israeli retaliation can hurt only Hezbollah cadres, Palestinian terrorists, and Shiite villagers, Syria's scruples about agreements have seemed to disappear.

Indeed, Assad's record of broken agreements easily matches that of other Middle Eastern dictators. In 1983, he broke a pledge he had made to the Reagan administration (via the Saudis) that he would accept the Israeli-Lebanese peace treaty and withdraw his troops from Lebanon. He did the opposite: as soon as Israel began to get out, he poured more troops into Lebanon. He completed the effective annexation of the country in 1990, after having joined the anti-Iraq coalition and being rewarded by the Bush administration with carte blanche in Beirut. And recently his Foreign Minister, Farouk al-Sharaa, declared that Lebanon and Syria were "like one country."

Assad is also in violation of the Saudi-sponsored Taif agreement, endorsed by all the Arab states, which stipulates the withdrawal of Syrian troops and the restoration of Lebanese sovereignty. This September marks precisely a year since Syrian troops were supposed to have left Beirut.

Even more puzzling is the current Israeli government's support of the notion—a favorite of European and American diplomats—that Assad is pursuing peace. Hezbollah, the Iranian-financed organization whose almost daily attacks on Israeli targets finally led to the retaliatory strikes of late July, trains its 3-5,000 highly motivated fighters in Syrian camps, under Syrian supervision, in Lebanon's Bekaa valley. It is equipped with Syrian arms, including potent Sager missiles, and Iranian arms brought through Damascus. The organization could not have mounted a single major operation against Israel without Syrian approval. Yet as soon as Labor came to power, Hezbollah became an "Iranian organization" operating independently. Indeed, it was only after the cease-fire ending the fighting in late July that Syria's role in "standing behind" Hezbollah was alluded to by Rabin (which did not prevent him from praising Assad a few days later).

Ignored, too, has been Syrian sponsorship of the Palestinians who openly call for the destruction of the Jewish state by force of arms. Last year, Syria held a conference of the ten "rejectionist" groups—among them Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and the radical PLO factions—in Damascus, where many of these organizations have their

* See Yigal Carmon's letter on pp. 2-3 above.—ED.

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headquarters. Syria also directs the operation of Radio Al Quds, beamed to the administered territories, which incites Palestinians against the "traitors" in their midst who negotiate with Israel. Unlike their Israeli apologists, the Syrians are quite frank about supporting the "armed struggle" as long as Israel occupies "Arab land." And they have flatly rejected Israeli demands to disarm Hezbollah and the Palestinians in southern Lebanon. In the peace talks the Syrians have rejected all Israeli suggestions to discuss a truce in Lebanon.

Nor has Assad slowed down the feverish pace of Syrian arming. Having replenished and modernized all branches of its armed forces, Syria surpasses Israel in virtually all major classes of military equipment, let alone in the number of troops. In April, Syria began to manufacture Scud-C missiles in factories near Hama and Aleppo.

Occasionally, Prime Minister Rabin and Foreign Minister Peres mention Syrian missile acquisitions and continued Syrian testing of sophisticated missiles. Israeli field commanders on the northern front also talk gravely of Syria's formidable new power. But mostly government spokesmen suggest that the Assad regime's march to peace is inexorable and must not be interrupted with irritating cavils about arms build-ups or backing Hezbollah.

The press is even worse. Not unlike Soviet apologists in the West during the cold war, Assad's promoters in the Israeli media explain that Syria is just as concerned about an Israeli attack as Israel is about Syrian aggression. Only when ambushes and shelling by Hezbollah cost the lives of Israeli soldiers in July did the press begin to question Syria's role, gingerly. Yet after the mini-Lebanese war caused by these attacks, Syria was given credit for helping to end it.

The army brass, too, has collaborated in pushing the notion that an agreement with Syria is a *sine qua non* of peace. The chief of the General Staff, Ehud Barak, making the kind of political pronouncement men in uniform are usually expected to avoid, has warned that failure to achieve an agreement with Syria would trigger a countdown to war. To which one wag responded, "Does such a countdown mean that Syria would start arming?" Barak also extolled Assad as a "responsible leader" following the cease-fire in Lebanon.

A SIMILAR make-believe approach has dominated the government line on the Palestinians. Terrorist attacks on Israelis are routinely attributed either to lone Muslim fanatics suddenly driven to murder Jews, or to the actions of Hamas cells. Yet the truth is that a majority of terrorist acts, against both Jews and Palestinian Arabs accused of "collaboration," are committed by the secular Fatah, Arafat's own group in the PLO. And despite the reputed rivalry between the PLO and Hamas, some of the operations are mounted by them as joint efforts. Arafat himself has repeatedly taken credit for every "execution" in the territories. ("I approve every file," he once said, "if not before the execution, then after it.")

Nevertheless, government spokesmen prefer to pretend that the killers are not operatives of the "moderate" Arafat, supporter of the peace talks, but "enemies of the peace process" such as Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and PLO radicals like the Habash, Hawatmeh, and Jibril groups. The not unreasonable assumption behind this charade is that the public might resent continued talks with proxies of the "mainstream" PLO in Washington while its gunmen are killing Israelis back home.

The separation between negotiators and killers was reinforced by Peres when he was asked why the subject of continued terrorism, both in Israel and the administered territories as well as on the Lebanon border, was not brought up at the peace talks. "Because the people who are doing the talking are not the people who are doing the shooting," he answered.

Yet leaving aside whether it makes sense to negotiate with people who do not control those "who are doing the shooting," the government is perfectly aware of Arafat's connection with terrorist activity. In early July, Minister of Health Haim Ramon, a rising Labor-party star who often represents the government in Knesset debates, was reported to have contacted Arafat with the proposal of a trade: direct Israeli negotiations with the PLO in exchange for the cessation of terrorism. The answer was a flat no.

This points to another government-propagated myth. When asked about the absence of reciprocal gestures by the Palestinians, Peres said, "There is nothing the Palestinians could give us. We just have to decide what we want to give them." In fact, however, a halt to terrorism is only one "confidence-building" gesture the Palestinians might make. Another would be to lift the boycott on Israeli goods in the territories and to appeal to the Arab states to terminate their economic boycott against Israel. But the Palestinians have been doing the exact opposite. When Kuwait announced that it was lifting the "secondary" boycott—the banning of foreign companies that do business with Israel from Arab markets—the Palestinian leadership yelled treason.

What the government seems unwilling to admit, perhaps even to itself, is that terrorist activity and guerrilla warfare are not "a campaign against the peace process." Individual members of groups like Hamas and Hezbollah may indeed believe that the peace process is a satanic Zionist-American plot, but the Arabs participating in the peace negotiations who use the services of these organizations—Syria and the PLO—are simply following a traditional totalitarian strategy of shooting while talking.

The immediate purpose of the shooting is to

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inflict as many Israeli casualties as possible. ("I want Israel to see a funeral a day on the TV screen," Assad said during the Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon in 1984.) The ultimate goal is to create internal pressure in Israel for a speedier peace settlement which would presumably stop the killing. A grieving Kiryat Shemona mother was shown on television after a Katyusha bombardment from Lebanon crying, "Enough, give them what they want, it's time to make peace." Similarly, clashes with the army are aimed at demoralizing Israel's soldiers. If peace is really at hand, getting killed defending a piece of land slated to be relinquished makes little sense.

IT IS, of course, possible that branding the terrorists "enemies of the peace process" is the government's way of deflecting criticism from its Left flank for its tough anti-terrorist measures. After all, Rabin sold his super-dovish Meretz coalition partners on the expulsion of 400 Hamas agitators by assuring them that it would strengthen the PLO's position and help the peace process. And following this year's Black March, in which terrorist killings—mostly inside the Green Line—occurred almost daily, the government imposed an open-ended closure on the administered territories with nary a peep from Meretz. (Had the Likud deprived 120,000 Arab workers of their livelihood for any length of time, the Left would have been in an uproar heard around the world.)

In the first weeks of the closure, terrorist attacks ceased almost completely. That Palestinian laborers were prevented from crossing the Green Line caused hardship and losses not only to them but to Israeli builders, industrialists, and farmers. Yet the public reacted with a sigh of relief. At which point the government began to view the closure as more than a security measure; now it was seen as a brilliant political move. The assumption was that the luxury of life free of terrorism would make a majority of Israelis long for the day when Israel would relinquish the territories.

What seems to have been overlooked in this picture was that only the Israeli army's presence in the territories made the closure effective. Nor was this effectiveness a product of the separation in itself. Greatly assisted by the forced immobility of the population, the army could now make virtually unhindered house-to-house searches, discover terrorist cells, and round up known individual terrorists by the hundreds. The results were nothing short of spectacular. Most of the men wanted for killings of Israelis and "collaborators" were either apprehended or forced to flee the country (mainly to Egypt).

It was this blow to the terrorist organizations, rather than the closure—which was in effect suspended within weeks—that reduced terrorist activities to a minimum. But the government, preferring to attribute the relaxation to "the separation," continued to perpetuate the myth that the closure was still in effect well after 60,000 registered Palestinian workers and 10,000 others had returned to work in Israel.

The government also seems to have overlooked something else. The brief initial separation of the Palestinians in the territories from Jerusalem made *them* realize how dependent they are on their leaders and their offices, institutions, newspapers, and information services, all of which are located in the eastern part of the city. Ultimately, the most dramatic accomplishment of the closure may have been the sharpening of the Palestinian demand for the inclusion of east Jerusalem in the autonomy plan and the future Palestinian state. "The Israelis and the Americans had better realize," said the Palestinian negotiator Haider Abdel Shafi in mid-July, "that without an Arab Jerusalem there will be no peace."

Shafi's observation is probably correct. His assessment of the ten rounds of talks in the twenty months since Madrid as utterly devoid of results is also far more accurate than Peres's glowing expressions of optimism. (Rabin has been more restrained.) Even the agreement with Jordan—"all we need is a pen to sign it with," said Peres before the beginning of the tenth round—proved a chimera. The delegations had come together on a draft according to which Israel would relinquish areas on the Jordan river bank and south of the Dead Sea, in return for Jordan's willingness to sign an agenda containing the words "it is anticipated that the process will culminate in a peace treaty." But the draft, subject to approval by the respective governments, came back from Amman with "minor clarifications": the Jerusalem issue must be resolved first; all the administered territories must be referred to as "occupied"; and the reference to a peace treaty at the end of the road must be eliminated. Here, too, the negotiations were back to square one.

THE Labor government's negotiating strategy is not easy to fathom. From the start, Rabin made one concession after another without a hint of reciprocation. Before the tenth round he declared—implicitly acknowledging what he had been doing up to that point—that the time of one-sided concessions was over. But he never said what he expected from the Arab side.

Concomitantly, the government has been portraying developments in rosy terms when in fact no progress has been registered. Even the one concession the Syrians had made to the Likud government—allowing Syrian Jews to emigrate—was withdrawn soon after Labor came to power. Nor did the hoped-for moderation of Palestinian demands—which was supposed to follow Israel's agreement to include Jerusalemite Faisal Hus-

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seini in the Palestinian delegation—ever materialize. On the contrary, the question of Jerusalem, which must be postponed to a later stage if any progress is to be made on the interim arrangements, became the central issue.

Overly optimistic pronouncements are probably unavoidable during negotiations. They are often used to create momentum and place the ball in the adversary's court. But under present circumstances it is difficult to see the purpose of a consistently Pollyannaish Israeli campaign. One possible explanation is that the government is deceiving itself about the willingness of the Arabs to make peace on terms that do not entail full Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights, as well as all other territories taken in the Six-Day War, and a Palestinian state with east Jerusalem as its capital. Another, less charitable, explanation is that the dovish faction led by Peres hopes to make the expectation of peace so overwhelming that prices which seemed prohibitive to the Israeli people only yesterday will seem worth paying tomorrow.

The Palestinians, like all the Arab regimes, enjoy an advantage democracies do not have. They can be intransigent and hard-nosed without fear of internal pressures for concessions and compromises. On the contrary, they must fear assassination if they *do* make concessions. Whatever some Israeli doves may imagine, it is a given that the Palestinians will not budge from the demand that autonomy—and later sovereignty—include half of Jerusalem. And it can be taken for granted that they will not agree to any substantial compromises on the territorial definition of autonomy: it will have to extend to all of Judea, Samaria, and Gaza. Nor will they give up on officially including the PLO in the talks.

Against these demands stands Yitzhak Rabin, who still insists on a few traditional Labor-party "no's": no discussion of the permanent solution before autonomy is established; no return to the 1949 armistice lines; no relinquishing of the Jordan valley and Gush Etzion settlements; no direct negotiations with the PLO; and no compromise on Jerusalem, which must stay undivided under Israeli sovereignty. But Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin, who voices Peres's opinions, has indicated a willingness to yield on *all* these points—with the possible exception of Jerusalem.

If Peres, Beilin, and the dovish faction in the government have their way, the gap between the Arabs' minimum and Israel's maximum will become so narrow as to be imperceptible. And what until recently was quite unthinkable—the establishment of a Palestinian state in the administered territories, the relinquishment of the Golan Heights, and perhaps even the division of Jerusalem into two capitals—may become official government policy.

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A Conservative Looks at Liberalism

William Kristol

In Bill Clinton's America, liberalism is everywhere dominant and altogether bankrupt.

By "liberalism" I mean post-1960's liberalism: a movement committed in politics to further expansion of the welfare state, and in social matters to an agenda of individual autonomy and "liberation." Liberalism in this sense pervades the key institutions of American society.

Thus, liberals have reclaimed control of the executive branch, and will soon once again take over the federal judiciary. Liberals continue to dominate Congress and most state and local governments; they rule virtually unchallenged over our educational institutions and our cultural and philanthropic organizations; they shape most of the products of the mass media, journalism, book publishing, and Hollywood. Liberalism is powerful in our churches and synagogues; and even the world of business is by no means generally hostile or impervious to the enlightened doctrines of the Left. Furthermore, government at all levels grows ever bigger and more intrusive—except with regard to sexual morality, where the ethos of individual liberation proceeds apace.

The election of Bill Clinton is, of course, the capstone in the arch. Until now, even as post-1960's liberalism was taking control of the institutions of American society, the great limit to its success was its failure to capture the presidency. A national majority, mobilized in good part in reaction to liberalism, repeatedly elected conservative Presidents (including even, it could be argued, Jimmy Carter) who stood as barriers to liberal supremacy. Now the tenuous balance of power is gone. Vice President Al Gore announced on election night that "We are the children of modern America." It is those children of modern America, having been formed by the late 1960's and having completed their long march through the institutions, who now govern America.

And yet, with all its apparent success, liberalism still fails to command the loyalty of the vast majority of Americans. Liberal possession of the commanding heights of American society is not matched by occupation of the ground below.

For two decades, more Americans have considered themselves conservative than liberal. From 1980 on, in polls taken by CBS News/*New York Times*, no more than 23 percent of the American public have identified themselves as liberals, and in January 1993 that figure stood at 18 percent. (The number identifying themselves as conservatives has averaged around 33 percent, with another 40 percent or so calling themselves moderates.) Even in the presidential race of 1992, the two *non*-liberal candidates received 57 percent of the vote, while Clinton, the one liberal, ran as "a new kind of Democrat"—that is, a not-so-liberal Democrat. In 1992, moreover, over the opposition of the liberal establishment, measures limiting the terms of legislators passed in all fourteen states in which they were on the ballot.

Polls confirm not only that the American people do not consider themselves liberals, but also that they reject most core liberal beliefs. Contemporary liberalism insists upon a latitudinarian view of the family, and it abhors the idea of "family values"; but on election day 1992, as measured in exit polls, the American people, by 70-25 percent, wanted government to encourage "traditional family values" rather than "tolerance of non-traditional families."

Or again, as the Clinton administration has demonstrated, contemporary liberalism inclines toward higher taxes and bigger government; yet the American people today, by 55-36 percent, would rather pay less in taxes and receive fewer government services than pay more taxes in return for more services.

Finally, contemporary liberalism stands or falls by a faith in the efficacy of big government; but popular distrust of government is at an all-time high. In 1972, 74 percent of Americans had at least a "fair amount" of confidence in the federal government; today, that figure has fallen to 42 percent. And in January of this year, by 69-22 percent, Americans agreed that the federal government creates more problems than it solves.

Contemporary liberalism, then, has not captured the hearts and minds of the American people. Indeed, its resort to the machinery of political correctness—the attempt

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to impose sanctions on views contrary to liberal dogma—has been driven in part by just this failure to capture those hearts and minds.

Ordinarily, such a failure need not be permanent. A confident and determined liberal elite might well expect to overcome popular hesitations or even resistance; it has done so in the past. But this brings us to the greater vulnerability of contemporary liberalism: beneath its smugness and self-righteousness, liberalism is undergoing a crisis of faith.

The liberal crisis of faith has sources that are profound, and an exploration of them is beyond my purposes here; but the *fact* of the crisis is, I think, undeniable.

Think back to contemporary liberalism's older (though quite different) cousin, postwar American liberalism. The liberals of the 1950's and 1960's were confident that government could fine-tune the economy. They were confident that enlightened government action could virtually do away with racism and poverty. (After signing one piece of Great Society legislation, President Lyndon B. Johnson proclaimed that "the days of the dole are numbered.") The more "philosophic" liberals were convinced that a rationalist humanism could supplant religious belief as the source of decency and morality. And liberals then also believed that international cooperation and "alliances for progress" would soon replace antiquated and retrograde forces like nationalism and ethnic tribalism.

Do today's liberals truly have faith in any of these propositions?

Compare, too, the inaugural addresses of John F. Kennedy and Bill Clinton: where the one is assertive, the other is plaintive. In 1961, President Kennedy hailed "a new generation of Americans" who would gladly "bear the burden of a long twilight struggle" against tyranny, poverty, disease, and war, and who would support the use of American military power, where necessary, "to assure the survival and the success of liberty." In 1993, President Clinton, by contrast, identified "the urgent question of our time" as "whether we can make change our friend and not our enemy."

In short, the older liberalism was confident of progress; contemporary liberalism seeks merely to keep up with "change," and seems rather doubtful as to whether it can handle even that rather uninspiring task.

But this loss of confidence does not need to be inferred; it has been openly proclaimed by none other than Hillary Rodham Clinton, the high priestess of contemporary liberalism. In her now-famous speech at the University of Texas this past April, Mrs. Clinton virtually declared liberalism's bankruptcy: "We are in a crisis of meaning. . . . We lack at some core level meaning in our individual lives and meaning collectively. . . . We need a new politics of meaning. . . . We need a new definition of civil society. . . ."

Who is "we"?, one is tempted to ask. But it is clear enough that in the first instance Mrs. Clinton means "we liberals." A confident liberalism once knew that the last thing "we" need is the vaguely feel-good, vaguely illiberal mishmash that goes by the name of the "politics of meaning." Today's attempt to reach for so sodden a life preserver is testimony to the fact that contemporary liberalism no longer knows what to believe.

Or consider the fate of the work of the Harvard philosophy professor John Rawls. In 1971, Rawls published *A Theory of Justice*, a book hailed at the time as the definitive theoretical defense of the liberal welfare state, and hence as a book for the ages. Does anyone now read *A Theory of Justice*?

Rawls has just brought out a new book, *Political Liberalism*,* in which he modifies his argument of twenty years ago. In 1971, in constructing his theory of justice, Rawls thought it reasonable to assume a "well-ordered society" in which there would be broad agreement on basic moral beliefs. Today, Rawls has abandoned this assumption as "unrealistic." Instead, he now tries to construct a political conception of justice that will, as he writes, be able to accommodate incompatible and even irreconcilable moral and religious doctrines.

Yet this bow to philosophical multiculturalism makes an already thin conception of justice thinner still. So meager a gruel cannot provide sustenance for a vigorous political movement. Nor can the job be done by such other stopgaps as deconstruction, critical race theory in law, or any of the increasingly exotic forms of feminism.

Liberalism today derives what energy it has from currents that are so far out of the mainstream (the radical gay-rights movement, the voting-rights arguments of Lani Guinier) that it must seek to keep them in check, while finding itself unable to explain exactly what is wrong with them. And if this is where liberalism gets its energy, its real political strength now rests almost entirely on the self-interest of individuals and groups who are dependent on government, and who have a material stake in liberal policies and doctrines.

Despite the mounds of writing and beehives of activity, then, liberalism is in a deep crisis. All of the churning at the periphery conceals the hollowness at the core. True, liberals can still intimidate those who might launch serious assaults against them; they do not hesitate to enforce compliance with their dogmas, or to root out heresy wherever it rears its politically-incorrect head. Yet even Mrs. Clinton has found it necessary to say, in

* Columbia University Press, 401 pp., $29.95.

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a recent interview, that she is a "conservative" on values. Today's liberalism, in other words, hardly dares govern in its own name.

TO WHAT can the condition of liberalism in the United States today be compared? *Mutatis mutandis*, and with all necessary distinctions duly registered: to the condition of Communism in the Soviet Union about fifteen years ago. Needless to say, American liberalism and Soviet Communism are worlds apart, politically and morally; but there is a certain structural similarity in their respective situations.

In the old Soviet Union, Communism was utterly dominant and, it soon turned out, utterly hollow. Marxism lacked the support of the people; and the Communist administrative class, the *nomenklatura*, had lost faith in the doctrines that justified its rule. But this did not lessen its desire to hang on to power. As Leonid Brezhnev is alleged to have said in 1968, "Don't talk to me about 'socialism.' What we have, we hold."

So it is in America. Our liberal *nomenklatura* clings to power, even though its god, too, has failed. Liberalism justifies its continuing hold on power by massive psychological denial. Thus, we are constantly reassured that all is well, or that all will be well once the liberal project is completed. As the liberal *nomenklatura* would have it, the public schools, for example, need only a bit more money, or a bit more multiculturalism. In the meantime, real, deep educational reform continues to be opposed—not because there are convincing intellectual arguments against it, but because too many teachers and administrators have a huge material interest in the status quo.

So, too, with race. Liberal policies like affirmative action have made race relations in this country worse, not better. Yet the liberal *nomenklatura* tells us that the solution is more and more of the same.

And so, again, with crime. Like the rest of us, liberals profess to be appalled by the crime rate, but they act as if police brutality were a more serious problem than the epidemic of lawlessness and violence, and they disparage the notion of building more prisons, the one certain way to cut the crime rate by keeping repeat offenders off the streets.

All this is due not so much to cynicism on the part of the liberal *nomenklatura* as to something more powerful, something closer to self-deception. But how long can such a situation persist? Liberals are now beginning to acknowledge, for example, that Dan Quayle was right about family break-up, but most liberals adamantly refuse to draw the implications—that is, to rethink the meaning and consequences of sexual "liberation" and of the tendency to devalue the traditional family. Yet ideas have consequences. Once a real rethinking begins, in this and countless other areas, the whole structure of liberal doctrine could crumble with great speed. Indeed, the unarticulated sense that "it" could happen here—that glasnost, as it were, could open the floodgates to real change—may well account for the remarkable intransigence in the face of new ideas manifested by the ideologists of contemporary liberalism.

This intransigence cannot be sustained forever. The liberal *nomenklatura* may hang on for a longer rather than a shorter time; the "prerevolutionary" situation can persist for a while. But an elite that has lost confidence in itself cannot long govern a society that has lost confidence in that elite.

One could object that the crisis of liberalism is nothing new; it became particularly evident in the late 1960's, when the liberalism of that period, incapable of standing up to assaults upon it from the radical Left, instead succumbed to them, thereby embarking on the long slide which has brought things to their present pass. Nor is liberalism's inner loss of confidence new, either. As Harvey Mansfield of Harvard presciently noted fifteen years ago: "From having been the aggressive doctrine of vigorous, spirited men, liberalism has become hardly more than a trembling. . . . Who today is called a liberal for strength and confidence in defense of liberty?" Finally, predictions of the demise of liberalism have also been around for a long time. So what is different now?

One difference stems from the very fact that post-1960's liberalism is now in total command. For twenty of the last twenty-four years, Republicans held the White House. Republican control of the presidency served to mask the dominance of liberalism over the society and even over major sectors of the polity. With Clinton in power, liberalism now has no excuse, and also no exit. In this sense, the election of Bill Clinton may yet prove to be, for liberals, a deeply Pyrrhic victory.

Another difference stems from the collapse of the Soviet Union and more broadly of Marxism. As long as it existed, Soviet Communism forced some sort of reality check on liberalism, reminding it that there *were* enemies to the Left. But now liberalism truly has no enemies to the Left. Is there *any* aspect of feminism, environmentalism, or multiculturalism that is clearly beyond the pale of contemporary liberalism? The collapse of Marxism has removed the last barrier to the tendency within liberalism to push liberal doctrines to destructive extremes.

CONSERVATIVE thought, for its part, may be revived and even radicalized by the dominance of contemporary liberalism. Where once some conservatives were con-

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tent to call attention to the limits of modern social policy, or to worry that, in practice, liberal policies weakened the social institutions upon which their success depended, now conservatives increasingly have the opportunity to call into question the very purposes and premises of liberal policy, and to debate how best to reconstruct the institutions of a free society.

Similarly, where once conservatives saw themselves as trying to slow down the progress of history in order to husband the moral capital of an earlier time, of a world that had been lost, now conservatives might see themselves as creating moral capital for a world that needs to be remade.

Indeed, most conservatives once secretly feared that history was "progressing" in a liberal direction, and that this progress could not be fundamentally reversed. Liberalism's loss of confidence could release conservatism from that debilitating fear. With secular humanism now exposed as the opiate of the elite, conservatives might now even dare to see in the modern "quest for meaning" the seeds of an authentic revival of religious belief.

This bold new conservatism has not yet come into being, let alone arrived at the point of taking control of the Republican party as liberalism has done with the Democrats. But if, once upon a time, conservatives felt a Burkean responsibility to uphold sound social habits and traditional customs against liberal debunking, now it is liberalism that constitutes the old order, dictating "correct" habits and permissible customs, while conservatives can become the exponents of light and air, of free and open debate, of demystification and even of political and intellectual liberation. The bankruptcy of liberalism invites the possibility of a new, governing conservatism.

Such a conservatism is needed, but that does not mean it will come forth. It is not inevitable that the liberal crack-up will be followed by some sort of conservative renewal or reconstruction. After all, to return to our earlier analogy, the jury is still very much out on what will succeed Communism in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe—chaos, varieties of neofascism, or decent civil societies. Comparable alternatives obtain here. And it is also possible that the liberal American *nomenklatura* will be able to hang on longer than one might expect, successfully beating back popular insurgencies from below and the loss of confidence from within. No outcome is preordained.

For conservatives, the immediate task is to contain liberalism and its depredations. But containment is not enough. In the end, the conservative task is not to contain contemporary liberalism but to transcend it.

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My 1950's

Joseph Epstein

> I want to live in a place again where I can walk down any street without being afraid. I want to be able to take my daughter to a park at any time of day or night in the summertime and remember what I used to be able to do when I was a little kid.
>
> —Hillary Rodham Clinton
> *New York Times Magazine*

SOCIALISM, it used to be said, was a system in which the past could not be predicted. Perhaps the same has by now become true of capitalism. The fate of the past—all pasts—is to be regularly twisted into different, sometimes quite grotesque, shapes by people with their own, frequently sentimental, often ideological, reasons for doing so.

This is what seems to be going on in the current revisions of the 1950's. The decade is being judged in the light of the decade that followed, and, it will hardly surprise anyone to learn, it is either found wanting or, at best, seen to be merely preparing the ground for glories that came afterward. In this new reading, what some of us fondly think of as the good old days turn out, on inspection, to be the bad old days.

What is really at stake in getting the 1950's right is a proper judgment of the 1960's. That key decade—it ran, strictly speaking, from the Berkeley Free Speech Movement in 1964 to the end of the Watergate scandal in 1974—remains, culturally, politically, socially, the great Rorschach test of our times. Say what you think of the 60's—loved them, hated them, found them a mixed bag—and you say a very great deal about yourself. But whether they are ultimately deemed a disastrous wrong turning, a road better not taken, or a necessary liberation is a matter of no small importance.

THE decade—that historical decimal system by which we categorize contemporary history—is of course a perfectly arbitrary chunk of time. Decades also happen to be chronological units that gather clichés the way a blue serge suit gathers lint. Every decade must live in history under the weight of the clichés bestowed upon it.

Let us, class, review a few of these clichés. The 20's were the Jazz Age, with flappers and Prohibition-era drinking—a sense of excitement pervaded, a good time was had by all. The 30's ushered in radical politics and unending fears about money, otherwise known as the Depression mentality. The 40's don't quite figure, having been half-lost to the century's largest war, which called for a strict rationing of clichés along with meat, butter, and gasoline. The 60's were all asizzle (ah, those sizzling 60's) with idealism, political activism, and daring experiments both sexual and pharmacological. The 70's were—thanks to Tom Wolfe, who so tagged them—the Me Decade, given over to excessive self-regard and heavy-breathing narcissism. But the 70's would come to seem positively Taoist in generous spirituality next to what the *clichémeisters* have laid on the 80's, the decade of unexampled greed and vicious disregard for one's fellow man: Reaganism is the code word here. Finally, although the clichés for the 90's have not yet been posted, not to worry, they will arrive as inevitably as baby boomers will get to Golden Pond.

I have delayed hauling out the clichés for the 50's chiefly because I am rather touchy about them. I was thirteen when the decade began and a newly married man of twenty-three when it ended. That decade had a good deal to do with forming me, and, though I hope I do not sound smug in saying so, I consider myself lucky in the time in which I was born.

A peculiar view to hold, some would no doubt say, about the age of Senator Joseph McCarthy, of Marlon Brando and James Dean and Elvis Presley, of Marilyn Monroe, Charles Van Doren's national television swindle, the great golfer named Dwight David Eisenhower, and, let us not forget, the hula hoop. Slip on a pair of blue suede shoes, pomade and comb your hair back in a duck's ass, put "You Ain't Nothin' But a Hound Dog" on the phonograph, and we can all dance to it.

TRUE enough, McCarthy, Brando, Dean, Elvis, Van Doren, Marilyn Monroe, Eisenhower, and the hula hoop all came to prominence in the 50's. But in what sense were

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they central to the quotidian lives of those of us who lived through the decade? David Halberstam, in his thick new book,* spends many pages on these figures and many more on others less widely known, from atomic scientists to discount retailers, in his attempt to capture the decade, both in its flavor and in its character. Yet in the end, for all his efforts, he has led us on not much more than a somewhat soured nostalgia tour. He has not caught life—at least not life as I knew it—in the 50's but instead those phenomena, such as the Beat Generation of writers, that earned heavy publicity during the decade. His book brings to mind nothing so much as the English critic F.R. Leavis's pointed remark about the self-promoting poet Edith Sitwell and her brothers being no part of the history of literature but only part of the history of publicity.

If Halberstam puts something like a full-court press on the 50's, wanting to cover everything from the *I Love Lucy* show to the U-2 spy-plane incident, Calvin Trillin, the *New Yorker* and *Nation* writer, in a slender book titled *Remembering Denny*,† concentrates his fire on an old friend, a man named Roger D. Hansen, a college classmate of whom great things were expected and whose life he takes to be in some way symbolic of the decade. Trillin was in the same class at Yale ('57) as Hansen, who went on to Oxford as a Rhodes scholar; who seemed so completely to epitomize the wholesome glamor of the 50's that his graduation was covered by the young Michael Arlen and the photographer Alfred Eisenstadt for *Life* magazine; and who, a few years ago, ended by committing suicide. Trillin casts about for reasons for his friend's failure and sad end—his temperament, his worldly mistakes, his late-discovered homosexuality—and finally concludes that he was a victim of the crushing 50's combination of ambition and conformity, a combination forming a "rigid notion of success" that someone at the poor man's memorial service called "silly and presumptuous."

Trillin, I believe, is wrong both about his friend and about the 50's. He does not want to recognize how devastating the discovery of homosexuality might be in a man raised on the values of Yale—values not of the 1950's but described as long ago as 1920 by George Santayana as muscular Christianity in the service of success. It cannot have been an easy thing for a man such as Hansen, whose friends thought he would surely end no lower than the United States Senate, to discover himself in his fifties in the *Satyricon* atmosphere of a contemporary gay bar. My guess is that neither Yale nor the 50's killed Roger D. Hansen, but rather a profound mortification which Calvin Trillin, committed to the rosy view of progressivistic liberalism, cannot hope to understand.

David Halberstam, like Calvin Trillin, is a man of impressive limitations. He is a man of neither wide nor deep culture but, in fact, of newspaper culture. As such he is attracted to the fad, the trend, the gross event, above all to the journalistic cliché that can always be extracted from these things. But unless one lives one's own life in public, such items are likely to touch one only peripherally. Searching Edmund Wilson's journals for the 50's, for example, one finds a paucity of references to the decade's presidential figures and candidates—Harry Truman, Dwight David Eisenhower, and Adlai Stevenson. Only in totalitarian or truly authoritarian countries do politics so dominate lives. Quite as much to the point, perhaps, there is no entry in David Halberstam's *The Fifties* for Edmund Wilson, whose writings were one of my own great personal discoveries in the 50's.

The standard view of the 50's, which is David Halberstam's, though he does not announce it straight out, is that it was a time when idealism slept, cruel discrimination was everywhere in force, mindless affluence was in the saddle, conformity reigned, and the cold war defiled everything. Such, such caused the absence of joys. People who grew up in the 50's have been called the silent generation, implying that these things turned them away from an interest in politics. The epithet "silent generation," clearly not meant as a compliment, was later set in concrete. But what it really means is that the 50's were not a good time for left-wing politics. Whether this is the same as not being good for the country is rather a different question.

PERHAPS no one grew up more isolated from politics than I and my friends in middle-class Jewish Chicago in the 1950's. As was true of many another Jewish home, our family was ardent for Franklin Delano Roosevelt; that is, my father was, while my mother, a very intelligent woman, did not find politics even an interesting distraction. My father despised Colonel Robert McCormick, publisher of the *Chicago Tribune*, for his isolationist views during World War II, and would not allow his paper in our home. As a young boy, I thought this a shame, for the *Trib* carried Dick Tracy and generally had much better comics than the *Daily News* or the *Sun*. Yet so passionate was my father about McCormick that once, in a snowstorm, when a *Tribune* delivery-truck driver offered to help him with a flat tire, my father, normally a well-mannered man, told him to screw off.

Because of his ardor for FDR, I always assumed my father was a Democrat for life, which is the way I started out. Some years later I was more than a little surprised to learn that he had voted not once but twice for Eisenhower. My father thought Ike was good for business and he

* *The Fifties*. Villard Books, 800 pp., $27.50.
† Farrar Straus Giroux, 210 pp., $19.00.

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was right, for his own small business flourished in the 1950's. Not being an intellectual—not, in fact, having gone to college—my father was not much of a sucker for style, and hence Adlai Stevenson, whom he thought a good enough man, left him a little cold.

Politics, though, was hardly discussed in our home. *Look* magazine came into our apartment, and so did *Life*, which everyone in the 50's, children and grown-ups, devoured weekly; but not *Time*. The only way we qualified as mildly ahead of our day was through early ownership of a television set, a great mother of a mahogany Philco console, with something called a cobra-arm on the accompanying phonograph. I watched my share of television, especially sports, but I was never swept up in it as I had been earlier, in the 40's, by radio shows, particularly the lineup of kids' programs on weekday afternoons and Saturday mornings.

At the close of a longish life, the British social historian R.H. Tawney claimed that the only progress he had noted was in the deportment of dogs. I suppose I could add that the chief progress in my lifetime has been in the manufacture of gym shoes. Not quite true, of course; but it is true that all the progress I have known has been technical: in medicine, in engineering, in calculation and computation and communication. Rich though they are, the rewards of technology do not bring happiness or wisdom.

Quite as much has been lost, not least the sense of progress itself. A belief in progress requires a setting of stability, and stability begins in the family. Growing up in the 50's, I had no friends whose parents had played the rough trick on them of divorcing. Only one acquaintance among the kids I went to school with was in revolt against his parents (later it occurred to me that they should more properly have been in revolt against him). We respected our parents, loved them, but found them, if I may now disrespectfully say so, rather beside the point—by which I mean that they did not have all that much to do with our daily lives.

Play was not yet organized. The endless cycle of lessons and special tutoring for middle-class children had not begun in furious earnest. Little League baseball had not yet been fully formed. Children were left pretty much on their own. Far from wanting our parents hanging around, we were pleased to cut loose from them. The father of one of my acquaintances used to come to all our softball games, and was contemptuously tagged by a Latinist among us as the Omnipresent.

Not only was there no pressure on me to go to a good university, but it would have been perfectly acceptable to my parents if I had chosen not to go to university at all. ("I think you have the makings of a good salesman," I recall my father saying to me. Since he was himself a good salesman, this was a compliment.) From the age of thirteen on—after Hebrew school—I made every decision about my education on my own: what foreign languages to study, what university to go to, what to study while there.

The relationship between parents and children in the 50's had not yet taken on the heavy therapeutic freight it bears today. The therapeutic had not yet triumphed, at least not in Chicago. (It was only when I moved to New York that I came to know anyone in psychoanalysis.) Our parents—certainly, my parents—had not yet reached the stage of culture where psychotherapy seemed a serious solution to anything. When, not long ago, my mother struggled through a lingering death from liver cancer, someone suggested that she might benefit from a support group made up of other people with terminal cancer. I should never for a moment have suggested such a thing to my mother, whose response I could have perfectly predicted. "Tell my troubles to strangers?" my mother would have said. "Why would I want to do that?" As a man of the 1950's, I have to report that I not only understand but quite agree with her.

We of the 50's were not rebels, with or without a cause (a damn poor 50's movie, *Rebel Without A Cause*, by the way). To be a rebel, to be in revolt, implied being locked into youthfulness. Far from wishing to stay young, we who were young in the 50's were eager to grow up. Growing up meant growing into freedom, which was the name of our desire.

I am reminded here of the English poet Philip Larkin's saying that his religious sympathies first began to wane when he discovered that in the Christian version of heaven one would become as a little child again. Staying a child was not what Larkin, or my friends and I in the 50's, had in mind at all. Like Larkin, we wanted "money, keys, wallet, letters, books, long-playing records, drinks, the opposite sex, and other solaces of adulthood." Everything in the culture of the 1950's provoked one to grow up. ("Oh, grow up," sisters would say to troublesome younger brothers.) The ideal, in the movies and in life, was adulthood.

In the 50's, one was encouraged to be adult and yet one believed in progress and hence in the future. Since the 60's, one has been encouraged to remain young for as long as possible, and yet not many people believe in progress and the future seems terrifying. This has all the makings of a paradox, until one realizes that the difference between the two cultural injunctions is that the first comports with biological reality and the second does not. Since one cannot really hope to stay young for long, the future brings with it nothing so inexorably as the prospect of growing old, which is to say, the prospect of certain defeat.

I do not want to make the 50's seem some altogether prelapsarian time, but the subsequent decades have tended to make them look good.

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Even what might otherwise seem their drawbacks have come to appear as advantages. Take sex. ("We didn't," I hear a well-timed Henny Youngman-like reply from the peanut gallery.) A man of my generation who is still single reminded me not long ago that when we were young we would go into a drugstore to buy a pack of cigarettes and shamefacedly ask to be slipped a packet of prophylactics, while today the procedure is exactly the reverse. Pornography was not so plentiful. Avant-gardists among us read Henry Miller in the green-colored paperbacks published by Olympia Press in Paris, which at nineteen seemed pretty thrilling stuff. Now pornography just seems part of the general plague of decadence.

As for the real thing, sex itself, in the 50's supply never came close to meeting demand, thus in one stroke confounding the Chicago School of Economics and frustrating almost all male adolescents. All boys wanted it and no nice girls provided it. If they did they were, *ipso facto*, no longer nice girls. A character in a Willie Morris novel, referring to his adolescence in the 50's, offers belated thanks to Frank Sinatra and Nat King Cole for making possible whatever little sex he was able to obtain in those years. I used to make the joke, perhaps no longer quite comprehensible today, that a number of my contemporaries, after all the amorous hours they logged at drive-in movies, would need a steering wheel and gear shift installed in their conjugal beds to make the transition from adolescence to married life.

Up-to-the-moment psychological thinking would no doubt say that all this repression could not have been other than distinctly unhealthy. The invention of the Pill, as everyone knows, allowed an easing-up of the rules in the sex game, though AIDS and other snakes in the field would soon bring players, badly shaken, back to the locker room. But even before AIDS, more sex did not seem to bring about more happiness, if happiness can be measured like the GNP. The institution whereby young people live together in trial marriages has not in any way lowered the divorce rate; quite, as it happens, the opposite. A strangely unsuccessful revolution, the sexual revolution, for in its aftermath there seems to be more rape, perversion, and other nightmarish sexual action afield than ever before. It is almost enough to bring back that line from a margarine commercial of a later decade: "It's not nice to fool mother nature."

As for the cliché about 50's conformity, by choosing to go to the University of Chicago in the middle 1950's, I managed simultaneously to sidestep conformity and to acquire my first taste of bohemian culture. Highly exhilarating it was, too, for this was before the entire culture had gone bohemian. Bohemianism at the University of Chicago was artistic, even in some of its aspects social-scientific, at least insofar as being a social scientist meant distancing oneself from the society one was studying. But it was also distinctly apolitical. The energies of serious people did not then seem to go into politics.

True, a forlorn Marxist bookshop on 55th Street was hospitable to those who wished to pass an afternoon complaining about Wall Street and the bosses. I recall, too, a scraggly SANE nuclear-policy group passing out leaflets at a card table on the corner of University Avenue and 57th Street, and seeming particularly hopeless while doing so. (Apologies to Stanley Kubrick, creator of the movie *Dr. Strangelove, or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb*, but, without ever loving it, somehow I never was able to begin worrying about the Bomb in the first place.) A man named Maynard Krueger, who ran for Vice President of the United States on the Socialist-party ticket and taught in the college in sandals worn over socks, was a mild political curiosity on the campus. But all this seemed slightly aberrant behavior. Politics, clearly, was not where the main action was.

Where the action seemed to be at the University of Chicago was in science, learning, and high culture, the last-named of which was immitigable, making allowance only for folk singing, the one bow in the direction of Midwestern prairie populism. As unembarrassed elitists—of an intellectual, not a social, kind—we at the University of Chicago were cognizant of Lonely Crowds, Organization Men, also Men in Gray Flannel Suits, and the other tags of the sociological literature bemoaning conformity in the 50's. For us, the point about conformity, clearly, was to avoid it, which, so long as one was a student at the University of Chicago, was, as we should say in the 90's, no problem. Merely going there conferred nonconformist status, which I, for one, as part of the then-small but rapidly gathering herd of independent minds of our time, was pleased to have.

The only kind of nonconformity worth attaining, or so it seemed to me, was available through a seriousness about culture. In the stumbling way of earnest young men from unbookish homes, I attempted to educate myself. Allen Ginsberg may have claimed to see the best minds of his generation "destroyed by madness/starving hysterical naked" and so forth, but it seemed to me that some of the best minds of the generations before mine had been devoted to literature, and I attempted to follow them. Unlike the case now, many of them were even located in literature departments: for example, Erich Auerbach, R.P. Blackmur, Lionel Trilling, Robert Penn Warren. Among novelists, Hemingway and Faulkner and John Dos Passos were still at work in the 50's. In poetry, so were T.S. Eliot and Robert Frost, Wallace Stevens and Marianne Moore, W.H. Auden and William Carlos Williams, not to speak of the ambition-crazed younger generation of poets then hitting their stride which included

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Robert Lowell, Randall Jarrell, John Berryman, and Elizabeth Bishop. Edmund Wilson still functioned outside the academy as the arbiter of literary culture generally.

None of these names appears in David Halberstam's book. Nor does the name of any serious American painter—even though it was during the 1950's that the center of contemporary art shifted from Paris to New York. Of serious music during the 1950's, not a word. Instead we have a lengthy treatise on Elvis Presley, whose music, in Halberstam's words, was "a sign of the political, economic, and social empowerment of the younger generation." Neither does the murderous conduct of Communist regimes during the 1950's get much space in his book. My own first clue to the evil of Communism was that Communist regimes not only would not tolerate writers and artists generally but had a distinct penchant for murdering them.

Two writers seemed particularly attractive to my generation, at least if I and the people I knew were any gauge. They were F. Scott Fitzgerald and J.D. Salinger. Fitzgerald had died in 1940, with none of his books in print and thinking himself a dismal failure, but by the 50's a revival of his works was well under way. Salinger was already famous for his quirkiness and the paucity of his literary production. Weaknesses and contradictions resided in both these writers, but they tended to be *our* weaknesses and contradictions, which perhaps made them seem all the more attractive.

Fitzgerald, who was greatly taken up with the rich, was filled with social snobberies; Salinger, dedicated to the sniffing-out of phoniness in contemporary life, sometimes lapsed into the precious. Yet both novelists were exceptional stylists—each made his own sweet music in prose—and in the fiction of each, style was put forth as the surest clue to determining a character's quality. A Fitzgerald hero was gracious, understood the refinements of personal relations, and had an enormous yearning and admiration for lives lived stylishly. A Salinger hero was marked by his superior awareness; even when mad, he saw not only more but more deeply than other people. The heroes of both writers were nonetheless relatively passive figures, not men of action. Style and awareness, their literary hallmarks, were the qualities that we of the generation of the 50's who considered ourselves thoughtful, whether readers of Fitzgerald and Salinger or not, tended to pride ourselves on.

F. Scott Fitzgerald's snobberies were all carried over, very much intact, into and straight through the 50's. American life, apart from the Army, was not only thoroughly segregated racially, but many neighborhoods were still "restricted" (to use the old euphemism for "no Jews allowed"). Even Catholics did not have a clear way, and the Irish were not home free, either, as John F. Kennedy would learn when he ran for the presidency in 1960. College fraternities and sororities, country clubs, corporations, large law firms, other social associations of various kinds were organized along lines of religious and (it went without saying) racial exclusion. Adverting to these old discriminations, I still occasionally joke about not realizing that they now let Jews into the Book-of-the-Month Club.

To be black was the worst of all social bargains in the 50's. Finding a middle-class restaurant to take black friends to was not then an easy thing to arrange. Unrepentant bigots walked the land, North and South, without official disapproval from society at large. Apart from rare positions in law and medicine, the ministry and the military were the only two institutions through which blacks had a chance to attain middle-class respectability and professional advancement. Early in the decade even sports had not yet fully opened up to black talent.

Yet, despite the many and very real restraints on blacks in the decade, one has to ask why 50's black writers (Ralph Ellison and the early James Baldwin) and black civil-rights leaders (Martin Luther King, Jr., Roy Wilkins, Bayard Rustin) were so much more impressive than the black figures in culture and politics who came later, under much less constrained conditions. How account for the distance in seriousness between, say, Ralph Ellison and Maya Angelou, between Martin Luther King and Jesse Jackson? In music, too, where blacks dominated jazz, the accomplished Negro jazz musician of the 50's was an immensely impressive figure: talented, dignified, often witty in the elegantly understated way that has always been inseparable from my own idea of cool.

Legal discriminatory arrangements against blacks began to break up in the 1950's. This was the decade of *Brown* v. *Board of Education*, the Montgomery bus boycott, and the rise of the civil-rights leader as moral hero. For Jews, institutional acceptance also increased, in law firms, corporations, and especially in universities. Northwestern, where I have been teaching for the past twenty years, still had a quota in the 50's on accepting Jewish students. Fewer than ten blocks from where our family lived when I was a boy was the restricted Edgewater Country Club where I caddied briefly; I cannot say that I spat each time I passed, but I was not displeased to see it go out of business in the 1960's.

As a boy, I was aware of social discrimination, but I took it as part of life. There was enough in my own Jewish ambit that was socially exclusionary, the distaste for intermarriage being but the most heavily italicized example. Jews also made lots of social distinctions, German Jews holding themselves above East European Jews and some East European Jews choosing to look down upon others. Anyway, being a Midwesterner, and not

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having tasted the rich snobberies of the Ivy League, I had no interest in becoming the first Jew to join the New York law firm of Sullivan & Cromwell or the West Side Tennis Club in Forest Hills or the Union League Club. Success on earth did not require attaining such heights.

ODD, but for all that was exclusionary in American life, Americans seemed to get on better then than now. The 50's were still pre-ethnic America, at least to the extent that ethnicity was not featured as it began to be in the 1970's. One was still an American Italian or American Irish, rather than, as later, the other way around. In private, groups might call each other every kind of degrading name, but in public, life ran along pretty smoothly. The rise not so much of ethnicity as of public ethnic consciousness seems to have isolated people more than previously. The assertion of ethnic pride, which was fair enough, pretty quickly turned into slightly nasty ethnic chauvinism, which was not.

In the 1950's, there was, it seems to me, a better sense of belonging to the nation. With certain exceptions—the upper and the lower classes—one lived less exclusively among one's own social class. In part, this may have been owing to such things as the military draft, then still extant. My own two years in the U.S. Army (1958-60) I found boring and a great waste of time. In retrospect, they have come to look better and better. Among other things, being in the Army as an enlisted man lifted me out of my own social class, ethnic group, tight little island. It provided a chance, too, to see parts of the country I should not otherwise have known: in my case, Missouri, Texas, and Arkansas. Most important, though, it gave me—and I suspect many others who did their time in the Army—a sense of being part of the larger country, which is no longer so easily available.

People lived not only on better but on less fearful terms with their neighbors than now. In Chicago, we locked our doors, but many people who lived through the 1950's claim never to have done so. Crime there was, but much of it seemed, in those days, in the hands of professionals, where it ought to be. The epidemic of drug addiction had not set so many dangerous amateurs loose in the streets. Whole neighborhoods were not then surrendered to the violent young. Not that one walked fearlessly everywhere; I am old enough to remember having been frightened by white guys. But in the 50's, unlike in the past 25 years or so, city life did not seem so menacing; not so many areas seemed so obviously out of bounds; paranoia did not seem so clearly the better part of valor. The rhythm of middle-class life was closer to that yearned for in the piquant epigraph Mrs. Clinton has supplied for this essay—closer than one fears it will ever be again.

Of course there is the danger that the past only looks better because it is farther away. But even allowing for that, I feel, to repeat, lucky to have come of age in the 1950's, a time of prosperity, tranquility, and extraordinary optimism about the future. Growing up during that time, one felt that one's life was going to be richer than that of one's parents—and not merely financially richer.

It is a measure of the psychological distance we have come since the 50's that one looks today upon one's children and grandchildren and feels, with sadness, that their lives, far from being better than one's own, are likely to be worse. The very real prospects of scarcity, perpetual animosity among social groups, radical slackenings in educational and every other kind of standard—such are among only the larger disfiguring craters looming on the lunar landscape of the future. Even after the resounding defeat of Communism, which should have called forth jubilation for the freeing of millions of souls from the most crushing organized villainy in the history of the world, the feeling of decline and fall still hangs in the air.

Nearly everything that was most troublesome about life in the 50's—Communism abroad, racial segregation at home, domination by an often narrowly intolerant mainstream culture—has been eliminated, changed, or defeated, without life seeming qualitatively better. Might this be because so much that was good about that decade—its wide margins of optimism, its insistence on ambition being redeemable only by merit, its belief in every kind of progress—seems to have been lost in the social and political shuffle of the ensuing decades? The true quality of the 50's ought not to be obscured either by cliché or by specious argument. Others may say that the past, like so much else about modern life, is not what it used to be. But those of us who lived through the 50's, who can answer affirmatively the perfectly sensible question of "Baron Münchhausen"—*vas you dere, Sharley*?—are under an obligation to remember them as they really were.

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The First Post-Ancient Jew

Hillel Halkin

SOMETIME around the middle of the 10th century, writes Robert Alter in his introduction to Dan Pagis's *Hebrew Poetry of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (1991),

> a momentous revolution occurred. A gifted, brash young man named Dunash ibn Labrat arrived in Córdoba, then the great center of Andalusian culture, after having served as secretary in Baghdad to Saadia Gaon, the leading talmudic and philosophical authority of the age. Dunash proceeded to do something shockingly iconoclastic: to compose secular Hebrew poems, using the Arab quantitative meters and following the Arabic conventions of genre, rhetorical ornamentation, and subject matter. Though many Jews were scandalized, and protests against the secular literary movement would continue for generations, the new poetry caught on like wildfire.

It is a complex question why Jews loyal to their religion—and there was no "secular" Hebrew poet in Muslim Spain who did not also compose religious verse and participate in Jewish communal life—were influenced by their Muslim environment to write in their sacred language on non-sacred themes when centuries of exposure to Greek and Roman culture had failed to have a like effect. Most simply stated, however, it can be said that whereas the world of Greco-Roman culture was one that tradition-minded Jews felt ideologically called upon to reject in its entirety, Islam—under the domination of which the great bulk of world Jewry was living by Dunash's age—was close enough to Judaism in its strict monotheism and belief in a divine text revealed in human language both to pose a disturbing challenge and to serve as a permissible model of emulation. For the first time in the history of rabbinic Judaism, what the linguistic scholar Max Weinreich called the principle of "horizontal" as opposed to "vertical legitimation"—that is, the acceptance of a scale of values taken from one's non-Jewish environment rather than from the immanent logic of Jewish tradition—vigorously asserted itself.

As a poet, indeed, Dunash (who had been brought to Córdoba by Hasdai ibn Shaprut, a Jewish physician and official in the court of the Caliph 'Abd ar-Rahman III, and the first prominent figure in a Spanish Jewish community just beginning to emerge from historical obscurity) was primarily an emulator. Only one of his poems is memorable enough to be anthologized today, and it too shows him caught in the shaky midflight of transition. It begins with an unnamed Jewish friend rousting the poet out of bed to attend a drinking party, an all-night revel such as was common among sophisticated Muslims of the age despite the Islamic ban on alcohol:*

"Rise from sleep!" I was told.
"Come, drink wine that is old
Among myrrh and aloes
And the scent of the rose,
While soft water in rills
Joins the lute in sweet trills
Beneath grape vines and dates
And tall pomegranates. . . ."

The friend continues to entice the poet with promises of a lush garden, unlimited drinks, and a barbecue the next day, but is finally rebuffed:

"Say no more!" I did scold.
"How can you make so bold
When God's Temple lies seized
By the uncircumcised?
. . . . . .
How dare you to carouse,
And uplift downcast brows,
Who are nought but exiled
And despised and reviled?"

The poem thus ends without indicating whether the poet has been inwardly tempted by an invitation which religious norms oblige him to reject, or is as genuinely offended as he insists. Certainly, the fact that his friend is given more and livelier lines than he makes a strong case for ambivalence. It has even been argued that Dunash's sympathies lie entirely with the friend, and that the poet's rejoinder is purely *pro forma*, a prudent concession to conservative readers for whom the very idea of a Hebrew poem on such a subject would have been scandalous.

Prosodically, too, the Arabic elements imported by Dunash show signs of incomplete assimilation. Whereas post-biblical Hebrew verse was not obliged to rhyme and did not have metrical feet,

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* Translations throughout are my own.

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its practice being to count only stressed syllables while remaining indifferent to the unstressed ones, Arabic metrics and rhymes were extremely rigorous; and although my translation does not reproduce their intricacies, it does aim to convey Dunash's strict adherence to their regularity. Even the way it forces the reader to mispronounce "pomegranates," or unnaturally to stress "you" instead of "dare," has close parallels in Dunash's Hebrew, which prefers sacrificing diction and even grammar to missing an Arabic beat. One feels here the convert's uncritical deference to the formal poetics of a verse tradition, perhaps the world's greatest in the centuries between the rise of Islam and the fall of the Abbasid Caliphate (the Arabs themselves, who also produced a rich literature of literary criticism, had no doubt that it was), with which the purely religious and liturgical Hebrew verse of the period could not compete.

I HAVE dwelled at some length on Dunash because only in reference to his starting point can one gauge the achievement of Shmuel Hanagid, the first of the great medieval Hebrew poets and one of the most remarkable public personalities in Jewish history, the unnoticed 1,000th anniversary of whose birth in Córdoba has so far this year not even been the occasion of a postage stamp.

One March or April day, a generation after Dunash's death, Hanagid threw a party himself in Granada, where he had entered the service of the Berber king Habus (ruled 1019-38), whose close adviser he became before rising under Habus's son Badis (r. 1038-73) to the position of head vizier. The Hebrew invitations he sent out read:

The cold is gone.
Now spring presides at winter's funeral.
The turtledoves are back
And from the treetops sound their call.

So, camerados, true-pledged friends,
Take note, make haste, and do not fail
To gather in my garden!
You will pluck roses there, scented like myrrh,
And—midst flowers and the twitter of the birds—
Toast time for its kindness
In bringing us together once again.
There will be song,
And wine
Bright as a lover's blush,
And free as our tears for those of us long gone.

We are still in Dunash's garden, but hardly in Dunash's world. Granted, the distance traveled is not quite so great as it has been made to seem: Hanagid's poem not only has the identical setting as Dunash's, it is composed according to similar rules and looks as different as it does only because I have disregarded these rules in translation. And yet my having felt compelled to do so is itself indicative of how much more technically sophisticated a poet Hanagid is, for unlike Dunash, he is relaxed enough with the formal system he is working in to create the kinds of counterpointing irregularities that a mimetic translation cannot easily capture.

Equally noteworthy is the way in which the conflict expressed by Dunash, whether it is psychological or merely social, has evaporated. There is not the slightest suggestion in Hanagid's poem that its author—who, apart from his political career, was also a leading rabbi and talmudic scholar and the unchallenged head of the Granada Jewish community—sees anything to apologize for, either in the party that he is giving or in the Hebrew lyric written in its honor. Its mood is one of anticipatory nostalgia, and it is an impressive illustration of how within 30 or 40 years, Jewish society in Spain had adapted to a new Muslim cosmopolitanism which—like Dunash's poetics—originally came from the East.

IT WAS this cosmopolitanism that made possible the rise of Shmuel Halevi ben Yosef ibn Naghrela, the scion of a wealthy family which originally hailed from Mérida. (The Hebrew epithet of Hanagid, which was already applied to him by his fellow Jews in his lifetime, means "the governor.") And yet by itself it would not have sufficed, as is evidenced by the fact that nowhere else in the Muslim world was such a career duplicated.

The particular opportunities for political advancement that 11th-century Andalusia offered were also a result of the breakdown of central authority that followed the sacking of Córdoba by Berber troops from North Africa in 1013, an event which marked the end of the city's dominance in southern Spain and of a unified Muslim kingdom there. From now on, power was dispersed among Berber warlords who established competing city-states in centers like Málaga, Seville, Ronda, Algeciras, and Valencia. Outsiders who imposed themselves by force and fought each other for territory and plunder while living in fear of palace coups, these kings were on the lookout to promote reliable administrative talent with no dangerous connections to local clans or factions.

Granada was founded as a city by such a ruler, Zawi ibn Ziri (r. 1013-19), who built his capital in a small fortress town in the Sierra Nevada and was succeeded by his nephew, Habus ibn Maksan. Of Hanagid's ascendancy under Habus and his son Badis, we are given an account by Badis's grandson 'Abd Allah (r. 1073-90), whose lost chronicle of Granada's history was discovered in a mosque in Fez in the 1930's. 'Abd Allah's none-too-friendly portrait of Hanagid was motivated both by a desire to explain how his ancestors could have mistakenly preferred a Jew to Muslims and by the conviction—the historical accuracy of which is in doubt—that Badis's son (that is, 'Abd

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Allah's own father) was poisoned by Hanagid's son Yehosef, who then sought to betray the Granadans to their enemies. Yet despite his animus against Hanagid, 'Abd Allah also points to some impressive qualities: resourcefulness, political savvy, enormous energy, unwavering allegiance, and coolness in risky situations.

To get back to gardens, however: a large, walled one was *de rigueur* for entertainment in Andalusia, as were plenty of shade and water; the Caliph 'Abd ar-Rahman III was said to have had such extensive ponds on his palace grounds in Córdoba that it took 12,000 loaves of bread a day to feed the fish. Hanagid has left us a charming poem about how his son Yehosef, who would become the publisher of Hanagid's poems after the latter's death in 1056, installed a decorative moat in his own garden, a renovation comparable to adding a swimming pool to a suburban backyard today:

Little or big, to make his father do it,
A word from Yehosef is all it takes.
"Come," he said,
"You haven't seen the garden.
It's never been so full of flowers,
And I've put in a lawn that I can loll on,
And run a brimming channel all around it
That rims it as the blue sky rims the earth."

We stepped into the garden,
Where paths of flowers thick as a scroll's lines
Could make a browser wonder which to
choose,
And sat beneath some trees—
Not rustic mastic or rude oak,
But pomegranate and castilian chestnut,
The leaves of which wove canopies above
While grasses cushioned us below
And a servant poured red wine in cups,
Put them on a raft of mottled reeds,
And floated them to us across the water,
As if they were two brides on palanquins,
And we, their grooms.
We tossed them off
And stowed them with the empties on the deck
For their return trip to our barquetender,
Who in a jiffy filled them up
And with a "Down the hatch, sirs!"
Sent them back.

It was a wonder to behold.
Talk of grand things to write a poem on!
There's nothing like a drink with someone
dear
And all that grass and water in a garden!

The man liked to drink and to write about it—and, on the evidence of his poems, he could hold his liquor well. Recalling a young party-goer who could not, he once wrote with a wistful and blatantly sexual pathos that reminds one of the middle-aged Cavafy:

What would I not do for the youth
Who awoke in the night to the sound of the
skilled flutes and lutes,
And seeing me there, cup in hand, said to me:
"Here, drink the grape's blood from my lips."
Oh, the moon was a comma writ small
On the cloak of the dawn in a watery gold!

Was Hanagid actively homosexual? It is hard to say, and, within the context of an Andalusian Arab culture with different notions of sexuality from our own, it is no less hard to say precisely what this would have meant. For one thing, besides being married and the father of children, he wrote heterosexual poetry, too:

Lady,
Will you not uncage the stag of love?
Send it, sweet-scented, word it is free,
You whose lips, so they say,
Are stained not with rouge,
But with the blood of young bucks.
Give love for love, for such are lovers' wages,
And take my soul and let that be your price.
My heart is cleft in two by your two eyes—
Unlock on yours the locket and revive it!

But the women in such verses are often predatory, and the poet's declarations suspiciously rhetorical. For any real erotic tenderness, we have to turn to his poems about young men, such as one that I have called "A Prayer for Sleep" (like other poets of the times, Hanagid gave his poems no titles):

Lord, turn the stripling's heart who stole my
sleep
And see that he returns it to my eyelids!

You cursed me when You let him make me
freely
The gift of all the love he then took back,
But what young beauty hasn't done the same?

Bear with his sin, for if aught happens to him,
Better it were I never had been born!

Is the "Lord" addressed here the same God of Israel Whom Hanagid turns to in his religious poems? Must we invoke some sort of cognitive dissonance to explain how the same man could, with no apparent sense of inconsistency, live the life of a prominent rabbinical authority and that of a philandering bon vivant? And yet if we must, we are calling upon what was becoming in the 10th and 11th centuries a common enough talent.

"To bed with reason is to awaken bruised," remarked Hanagid's contemporary, the Baghdad poet and intellectual Abu-al-Ala al-Ma'arri—which did not prevent him, a practicing Muslim, from conducting a lifelong affair with the lady; and while the odd bedfellows in Hanagid's case were not so much faith and reason as religious precept and behavior, juggling worlds was a trick that his age had learned to be adept at. Some, like the Muslim el-Farabi, practiced philosophy; Hanagid, who did not possess a particularly speculative mind, preferred wit. There are poems of his in which we may be witnessing the histori-

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cal birth of Jewish humor, or, at least, of that Jewish propensity, not always comprehensible to the pious of other faiths, to joke freely about Scripture and tradition while remaining firmly attached to them. One of these I have named "Spoken in a Tavern":

They've slept themselves away, my dear,
The years,
The good, the bad in them—
A dream.
Well, let them snore, I say!
God give you pluck to turn your look away
From mysteries whose mastery's best left to
Him,
And tell that miss to fetch a glass
(Yes, that lovely serving lass)
Of fine falernian,
Of vintage so antediluvian
That Adam drank of it,
Or at the very least,
No newer than Noah's
First harvest from the slowly drying earth.
I want a wine
Of tawny coral with the scent of myrrh,
The kind King David once was served
By queens and courtly concubines.
And when it was decanted into vials,
He had the Levites tune their viols
And sing in clearest clarion
(Just don't ask what Psalm it's in):
"O Lord,
Long be it stored
And poured
From bung-tight barrels evermore
For all who drink the grape's juice in good
cheer
And wisely clasp the cup!"
My dear,
As for the rest
(Fear God, remember death, etcetera),
You do not need a teacher.
And anyway, it's in a book
By David's son, the Preacher.

Some scholars have sought to defend Hanagid's moral probity, and that of the Hebrew poets in Spain who came after him, by reminding us that poetry is not fact and that the medieval Muslim world was less inclined to believe that beauty is truth than is our own, which tends to associate honesty of expression with emotive power and aesthetic integrity. Arabic poetry was replete with stock themes and images on which poets were expected to ring repeated changes regardless of their personal experience, and there was a strong tendency in medieval Arabic literary criticism to follow Plato rather than Aristotle in equating the poetic with skillful dissembling rather than with idealizing verisimilitude. In the words of the 10th-century Andalusian Muslim critic Ibn 'Abd Rabbih, who may well have been expressing his own view in the guise of an unnamed source's:

> A man of letters was once asked who, in his opinion, was the greatest of all poets. To this he answered: he who can present what is false under the appearance of truth, and what is true under the appearance of falsehood, through the charm of his poetic concept and the delicacy of a poetic expression, in such a way that he may be able to deface the most perfect beauty and to embellish even utter ugliness.

Hanagid's drinking poems, let alone his erotic poems, it is therefore argued, cannot be read autobiographically; a poet in his day and age was judged by how much better than his rivals he said the same things they did, and poetry was a species of competition whose form and subject matter were as much a given as a tennis court is to an athlete. Indeed, Arab poets commonly held improvisatory contests on themes and in meters arbitrarily presented to them, or else entertained themselves with group verses in which each participant matched a line to what came before. When challenged, his son tells us, Hanagid himself once made up thirteen off-the-cuff poems about some apples lying in a bowl. One of the more successful of these went:

Nearby some ruby-red, farm-grown apples,
I spied a spice-box, apple-shaped itself,
All silver and gold leaf.
"Would you not like a realer peel?" I asked.
It flashed a wordless smile that meant:
"Of course—
When knaves have no more teeth."

Needless to say, this is in itself a sly comment on the difference between art and life. And yet even if it is only our modern, romantic illusion to think that we can instinctively tell when a verse has come from a living place in a poet, few of us would believe that a poem like "What Would I Not Do for the Youth," which seems to net the very tease and wriggle of time, can be a mere studio sketch. Moreover, much of Hanagid's poetry is so self-statedly experiential that, whatever cultural influences were brought to bear on it, its immediate inspiration can hardly have been the copybooks.

More than any Spanish Hebrew poet who followed him, Hanagid was in the habit of writing occasional verse linked to specific events that often enable us to date the precise day of composition. Take, for example, a poem he wrote about an unusual series of eclipses that occurred in the winter and spring of 1044-45: astronomical tables establish that its first part, or a draft of it, was in all likelihood written on the night of the lunar eclipse of November 8 (the 15th of the Hebrew month of Kislev), 1044; its second part, on or soon after the solar eclipse of November 22; and its third part, before the lunar eclipse of May 3 (the 15th of Iyyar), 1045. Accordingly, I have broken it up into three sections, although its Hebrew text has no such formal divisions.

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1.

How can you sleep, my friend?
Come,
Get out of bed and up to wake the dawn,
And look up at the leopard-coated sky,
All, everywhere, bespangled,
And at the full-grown moon,
Half-blackened, like a saucepan from the fire,
Or a fair face recessed in a deep doorway—
And think too of the day that, late this month,
Will so precipitously lose its light
That what is left gleams like a golden crown
Upon a Moorish head,
While livid mother earth weeps for her sun!

2.

He has struck His two lights in one month, the glory-great God,
First blotting the moon with earth's orb and then hiding the sun with the moon!
All this He has done, He who willed the work of Creation,
Already at which He bruised the dark eyes of night's mistress
And dazzling made the day's queen,
So that, bedimmed from view,
They can be likened to two stricken women,
One all in black,
The other black and blue,
And He to a grand lord,
Who, having dealt to each a deathly potion,
Wife after paramour,
Now grimly gathers all his starry liegemen.

3.

Look, look and wonder, regard all this, look and say: All might is Yours,
Who trims His lamps and palms them in the scale-pan of His hands!
In mid-Kislev You trapped the moon in darkness like a bird,
And in Iyyar will cage its light again,
You, who need but frown
down
at the earth
For it to totter like a drunk,
Who dips
His Dipper
toward the Pole
And puts the fool's cap on Orion's head,
And rounds this buckler of earth for men to live on,
Then treads them out in a hurrahless harvest.
Yours is all glory, all everything!
Nothing there is—no chariot, no horse—can move without You;
No wind, no weather hot or cold, You cannot chill or heat.
You roil the bottom of the depths and fret the sea
And see to it that all men wing to death
Like arrows to their targets—
From which,
Upon that bitter, great, and frightful day,
Them will You wake and judge who left Your Law.
Ah, in Your scales of justice then, O Lord,
Let my right deeds outweigh, eclipse, my sins.

THE poem ends with a movement typical of Hanagid's religious verse, from an event observed to the self of the observer. He is indeed the first post-biblical Hebrew poet to display a self at all—in the special destiny of which he had a mystic belief. One of his poems tells of a childhood vision in which his God-favored status was first revealed to him:

In the worst of times, I think of Your visitation.
You are good, and just are all Your words and thoughts,
But when desperate days come
And I scan them in vain
For Your saving chivalry,
I think of that time.
Archangels you sent me, and I—
I was only a boy in his bed.
They sat across from me and Mikha'el said first:
"This is what God says: 'I am your champion.
Cross wild waters and I will be with you.
Let foes flood and you will breast the river.'"
Then his companion Gavriel spoke too
And said that he had heard it said to me
In and about Your chariot:
"Walk through fire, you will not be burned,
For I will tell the flame never to touch you."
This was the message, like a sword put in my hand.
When I see swords now, Lord, I count on Yours.

The first and last lines make it clear that this memory was evoked during a difficult juncture in one of the military campaigns in which Hanagid helped lead the Granadans. Perhaps it was the war that climaxed in the battle of Alpuente, where a Granadan army defeated the forces of Almería on August 4, 1038; for in a long poem written about this bloody clash, Hanagid refers to the same "visitation." He begins there by reviewing the events that led up to the hostilities and proceeds to a description of the fighting itself, which took place in a defile in the mountains:*

It was a day
Of purest fury with no quarter given:
So tightly did the facing ranks press forward
That death could have been thought a fought-for prize.
Each man sought fame in battle, though each knew
His life might be the price. The hoof-struck earth
Quaked as it did when brimstone fell on Sodom,
And faces flushed with glory grew as grime-streaked
As the bottom of a pot. The day was bleak and foggy;
The sun, black as my heart; the sound of war,
Like heaven's thunder or a storm at sea

* It is unclear what Hanagid's precise role was in this or other battles described in his poetry. He himself implies that he was in command of the Granadan troops, but it is possible that he was more of a head quartermaster and political commissar than a tactical commander.

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When breakers crash. The very fundament
Tottered on its pillars as though drunk,
While over it steeds darted in and out
Like vipers from their holes.
Spears bright as lightning filled the firmament;
Serpentine,
The bent-backed bows spat bees,
Arrows thick as raindrops
That made sieves of shields;
Swords, raised overhead,
Gleamed like torches through the gloom,
Till with a downward stroke their light went out.
Blood flowed on the ground as in the aisles
Around the altar in the Temple, and brave men
Flung down their lives as if they vied to die
And thought the gory gashes on their brows
Were laurel leaves, and self-annihilation
Their faith's creed.

At this point, characteristically shifting back to his own situation, the poet writes:

Ah, what was I to do,
Trapped in that fray
With no one and with nothing to sustain me?
All hope was wrenched from me—and so it was,
While warriors poured out their blood like water,
In prayer I poured out my heart to God. . . .

And he cries out:

Can a man You gladdened with Your pledge of
"If you pass through water, I am with you"
Be washed away?
Surely Your long arm can rescue him!
If you promised him
"Though you walk through fire, you shall not be burned,"
Can battle scathe him?

YEHOSEF's recognition of the formative importance of this childhood experience made him put "In the Worst of Times, I Think of Your Visitation" at the head of his collection of his father's verse. Several of Hanagid's poems were written as letters from the front to Yehosef himself. From an attack on an anti-Granadan coalition outside the city of Lorca on the Sangonera River in the summer of 1042 we have two such missives—one penned on the eve of the assault and the other the morning after.

The first, an ethical will, is fraught with anxiety:

Yehosef:
All that I have been through,
And all the peril I have taken on myself,
Have been for you—
And were it not for you, I long ago
Would have become a wanderer in this world
As have become so many in your time.
I write you the plain truth—
Who is there to write it but a father?—
And as I write, death japes at us,
Its long mouth wide agape, and I know not
Whether in the morn, when the foe rises,
The battle will go for us or against us.
But if it is fated, son, that never again
You see me, nor I you,
Then, when thou sittest and when thou risest,*
Mark my words.
May they be first to rouse you from your slumber,
And on the day there is no one to teach you
Let them be your teachers and your guides.

In all your ways—
With all your soul—
With all you are—
Fear your Maker and Creator.
Study to be wise and sensible,
For wisdom is the only praise you need,
And sensibleness the sole pedestal.
Obey your mother;
Speak gently to your uncle and your kin;
Respect your friends;
Be loving to all creatures;
See, before all goods, to your good name.

Yehosef:
Give to each man what he asks of you,
And if you have it not, have a soft answer.
Share in what there is with those who need it,
Although in sharing, think of your need too.
Make something of yourself! Do not make do
With what I've done, for doing's all.
Excel, exceed your elders—and yet be not
Unaccepting of those younger than you.
Ah, how much more I still could say regarding virtue
That you may have to find out for yourself.
If God brings me home, I'll tell you of it—
O may He save you from all harm!

In the end, victory proved easy: the enemy panicked and fled and Hanagid sent poetic word of the rout to his son in Granada, 120 miles away, by carrier pigeon. The giddy relief—and most probably, the speed—with which this poem was composed is reflected in its tumbling, two-beat lines (of all the translations appearing here, this one is formally most faithful to the original):

Go, tongueless dove
on a herald's commission,
For pinned to your wing
is a note I have written,
Rose-and-lavender scented—
and since in its transmission,
Although you fly fast
and head for the horizon,
A hawk or a snare
you did not keep your eyes on
May stay or delay you
midway in your mission,

* This is an allusion to the biblical verses in Deuteronomy: "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart. And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." Hanagid's poetry is, in the tradition of Hebrew intertextuality, full of linguistic references to the Bible, some solemn and some humorous, a feature that the translator generally has no choice but to ignore.

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I'll send after you
a second swift pigeon.
Whichever lands first
atop the high ridge on
Yehosef's roof
will drop like a falcon
Onto his arm
for him to unfasten
This letter and read:
Dearest son!
The accursed foe has fled
to the hills like chaff blown
In a field by the wind,
or else he has flown
Along the back roads
in a fit of confusion
Like a lost flock.
Ah, what an illusion
To think he could wreak
on us the grim ruin
He ran from last night
before our lead column
Could even attack!
Slaying and slain
By one another,
his men fought and drowned in
The ford of the river
while the walls of the town
They had hoped to conquer
looked down in derision.
By God, they were caught
like a thief in the open,
Wearing their shame
as a man wears a coat on
His back! With the dregs
of disgrace they were drunken,
And I, who had feared
like a laboring woman,
Was delivered by God
as by rain in a famine,
Which lightened my eyes
while it made their skies darken.
Therefore I sing
amid their lamentation,
In my household—joy,
in theirs—desolation.
And it is you, Lord, I hymn:
the Rock and the Bastion
Ever addressed
by my soul's supplication.

In the awe of the great
hand of God therefore stand, son!
Now assemble the people
and read them this chanson.
Bind it tight to your heart
like the thongs that we pray in,
With these words to remember
victory's day in!

Although Granada had a large Jewish population, it is unlikely that Hanagid actually expected his son, who was seven years old at the time, to "assemble the people" and read them a Hebrew poem, and one can assume that he had already sent notice of the triumph to his liege Badis. Be that as it may, though, Yehosef—who succeeded his father as Badis's prime minister before being killed in an uprising accompanied by savage anti-Jewish pogroms in 1066—was one of Hanagid's two great loves.

The other was his elder brother Isaac, a prominent rabbi in his own right, who died in the spring of 1042. The nineteen poems about him that Hanagid wrote in the course of the following year are not only the greatest body of elegiac poetry in Hebrew, they are unique in world literature as a poetic documentation of bereavement. Beginning on a note of disbelief and ending with final acceptance, they omit not a stage or emotion in the process of mourning.

The first poem of the cycle tells of Isaac's sudden illness. In the second, the poet learns of his brother's death while on the way to visit him with a physician:

Hurrying to my brother
(Hearing he had fallen still more ill),
I met—stock still stood he!—a messenger of ill.
"Why speak you not?" I asked.
"Tell me of Isaac! Well?"

"Ah, he is dead,"
Was all that that man said.

"Be still," I cried, "and may dust fill your mouth!
Would every woe were your woe!
Might they bury you who bore you!
The doctor with me many like him healed has and made well,
And you say he is dead who led his age and people?
I tell you he but sleeps!"

"Alas," said he,
"Into such sleep
No man who woke thereafter ever fell."

In the fifth and shortest poem of the cycle, the realization of loss sinks in irrevocably as the poet, thinking of his brother, tells himself:

Give up, my soul, all thought of seeing him again.
Learn to live without him—and if you
Find that unthinkable, die too!

By poem seven, shock has yielded to the full force of grief. The poet returns to visit his brother's grave on the day after the funeral, and says to him:

Ah, God bless you, brother,
For my sorrow would not let me stay away!
I buried you last night with bitter heart
And bitter-hearted I return today
To visit you.
Are you all right?
Shall I speak
louder?
And will you hear me if I raise a voice
That's cracked with grief?
Why don't you answer me?

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Say how you passed the night in your new
home!
Did you begin to feel your skin peel from your
bones,
Your jaw unsocketed?
Did life's last sap run slowly out of you
As my tears trickle from me, one by one?
O eldest of my father's sons,
What can I do but leave you in the hands
Of Him who is my hope, and hope
That as He birthed you from our mother's
womb
He will unearth you from a brother's tomb—
And go in peace!

Poem eleven is about the guilt the mourner feels as the first, paralyzing sense of anguish begins to wear off:

What,
My brother scarcely dead a month,
And I already long for bathhouses,
amusements, dalliance?
Can I so faithless be, a traitor to my cause?
Let me mourn on, then: days desolate, hands
struck in grief, beard unbarbered, meals
chewed in solitude, all consolation spurned,
Bereft.
He lies untongued. What voice to weep with
except mine does he have left?

Yet another, more tentative turning point is marked by the fifteenth poem, in which the poet pays a condolence call on another family that has lost a brother. For the first time since his own bereavement, his feelings go out to others rather than to himself, preparing the way for a return to the human ranks. At the last moment, though, still not ready for the relinquishment, he retreats to the centrality of his own loss:

A close-knit family,
Clustered like stars,
The Dipper, or the Hyades,
And he their first and brightest.
Why, they swore by him, lived by his word!
Well, Death has him now,
And though they grieve for him
And rue their fate,
He's gone.

I thought of you today, my mother's son,
When, come to condole,
I joined my voice to theirs and wept with them.
In truth, had any eye of theirs been dry,
I would have been the first to chide
Such coldness,
Since every tear those mourners cried
Fell, in my heart, for you.

The eighteenth and next-to-last poem is written on the first anniversary of Isaac's death and is once again addressed to him. With it, the poet's mourning is almost complete. His old verve is back, and his longing, into which for the first time a note of jocularity has crept, is more wistful than pained:

Twelve months gone by, and still the huntsman
Death
Holds you ensnared! Or do you like his clay so
well,
Find worms such better company than men,
That you would stay?
Just think, my dear,
If you could shake the dust off, drop in on
your old haunts, chat with old friends again,
and let me tell you of my latest conquests!
If only a man—flesh putrefied, bones dry as
twigs, a prisoner (soul heaven-prised) of
earth, a meal for maggots, a banquet of
stuffed shrouds—could do it!

Latest conquests? I have taken a liberty, because the Hebrew (*kravai ha-hadashim*) apparently refers to military engagements alone. And yet in translating Hanagid one owes him so many untranslatable puns and double entendres—he was, as I hope I have managed sporadically to indicate, a great lover of word-play—that one may be pardoned for seeking to indemnify him by straddling meanings in a place where he does not. I doubt that in this particular case he would have minded. As he aged, it is true, his verse, like that of many poets, grew more somber and meditative, but even at its most pleasure-renouncing it is not above a roguish wink. He remained to the end a man of contradictions.

A FRIEND once remarked to me about Ovid that if he were magically transported to the present, it would take him 48 hours to be up and running: 24 to get over his time-machine lag and 24 more to refill his address book. I do not think that Hanagid would acclimatize nearly so well. First-century Rome stands closer to New York than does 11th-century Granada, and even among the neo-Orthodox Jewish sophisticates of Manhattan, he would be unlikely to feel quite at home.

And yet just as, according to kabbalistic legend, all men and women have the roots of their souls in the soul of Adam, there is a sense in which all Jewish souls today, although they may feel no particular affinity with him, have their roots in Hanagid's. To call him the first modern Jew might appear to be millennial hyperbole; let us say then that he is the first unmistakably post-ancient one. Jews have been juggling worlds ever since.

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Sex & the Feminists

Carol Iannone

IF THERE is a young woman today who could be said to have imbibed feminism with her mother's milk, it is Katie Roiphe, daughter of the Anne Roiphe who wrote *Up the Sandbox,* a landmark feminist novel of the 60's. When she was little, Katie Roiphe tells us in her new book, *The Morning After: Sex, Fear, and Feminism on Campus,** she thought of feminism as "something like a train you could catch and ride to someplace better" than the limited world her grandmother, Anne's mother, inhabited. And as she grew older, Katie came to believe that feminism meant being one's own person and speaking one's own mind.

But as an adolescent Katie emerged from her maternal home into the larger world, and there she was met by people ready to tell her what to think and feel, to treat her as a delicate flower in constant danger of assault, to see her as a passive, naive innocent in need of protection from male predators obsessed with sex.

Where did the young Roiphe encounter such backward attitudes? At the debutante ball? The Junior League? The DAR? No, it was at Harvard, and later at Princeton, where she is now a twenty-four-year-old graduate student in English.

At these great progressive institutions, Katie Roiphe was introduced to the world of date-rape workshops, sexual-harassment peer-counseling groups, women's-center hot lines, "Take Back the Night" anti-rape marches, and blue lights burning ceaselessly all over campus so as to lessen the chance of sexual assault. This is a world, she writes, that is a complete reversal of the one she had thought feminism was striving to create, a world closer to the one her grandmother inhabited before the feminist train left the station.

DESPITE some shortsighted and superficial analysis, *The Morning After* is remarkable—the first intelligent cry of protest from Roiphe's generation against what feminism hath wrought in the name of woman. With freshness, honesty, sincerity, and common sense, Roiphe describes the new campus "rape-crisis" movement which is based on ever-expanding definitions of sexual humiliation.

Thus, Princeton's guide for students identifies sexual harassment as "unwanted sexual attention that makes a person *feel* uncomfortable" (emphasis added), and instructs that it "may result from a conscious or unconscious action, and can be subtle or blatant." Such attention can include "leering and ogling, whistling, sexual innuendo, and other suggestive or offensive or derogatory comments, humor, and jokes about sex."

The definition of rape is also expanding, now encompassing, according to the author of one essay on the subject, "a woman's consenting to unwanted sexual activity because of a man's verbal arguments *not including verbal threats of force*" (emphasis added).

So subtle are these forms of harassment and rape that one pamphlet quoted by Roiphe cautions: "Many have difficulty recognizing their experience as victimization." Therefore, counselors must "use the words that fit the experience, validating the depths of the survivor's feelings and allowing her to feel her experience was serious." Or, as Roiphe remarks caustically:

> . . . if you don't tell the victim that she's a victim, she may sail through the experience without fully grasping the gravity of her humiliation. She may get through without all that trauma and counseling. Buried within this description of helping students overcome the problem of "recognizing their experience as victimization" is the nagging concern that the problem may pass unnoticed, may dissolve without political scrutiny.

Roiphe stresses that the atmosphere of "crisis" on campus is not just the work of a few vocal individuals or groups, and "not just the product of a bureaucratic mechanism" (as some have claimed), but rather involves students from "a cross section of the college community" who enjoy direct administrative sanction at the highest level. "At Princeton, in 1988," for example, "the university's president, a provost, and the dean of students marched" for "Take Back the Night."

THE classroom, too, is supporting the new feminist vision of life, if at a slightly more abstract level. Here Roiphe offers some priceless glimpses into what is passing for advanced literary studies these days at our nation's very best schools. Take this description of a spirited exchange on Edith Wharton among our future preceptors of literature:

> Someone argues that her novels are elitist and bourgeois. Another person adds that Wharton is anti-feminist, because some of her female characters are insufficiently developed, . . . one of the men in the class [contends that] "Edith Wharton's characters are necessarily anti-feminist because within the hegemonic male discourse, it is impossible for the female voice to be empowered."

Given this atmosphere, and given definitions of sexual harassment and rape like the ones cited

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above, it is not surprising that "epidemic" numbers of women are being found to have been raped or sexually harassed on today's campus. It is almost as if feminism had finally discovered a problem that can unite all women across all barriers: the existence of men.

One essay, accordingly, warns that "the harasser is similar, perhaps disturbingly so, to the average man." A book advises: "Since you may not know who has the potential for rape, be on your guard with every man." A pamphlet asks, "Is Dating Dangerous?" Roiphe reports a sophomore fretting over the risk she incurred by letting a young man who had confessed to an infatuation with her drive her home. "Nothing happened, thank God," says the young woman, "but it scares me to think what could have, it scares me to think that I trusted him after I knew how he felt about me." A friend agrees, adding that "you have to stay in public places in situations like that."

FOR Katie Roiphe, the assumptions embedded in the movement against date rape are a jargon-ridden, psychobabble-filled version of the Victorian cult of femininity still operative in her grandmother's world: "men want sex, women don't"; "women are innocent, men lascivious." She cautions that "in generating and perpetuating these kinds of myths we should keep in mind that [similar] myths surrounding female innocence have been used to keep women inside and behind veils." But fat chance of that today! In her fresh-faced, earnest way, Roiphe underestimates the rising feminist tyranny her book amply documents. If there is any coercion, it is coming from the feminist end; again, the evidence is right there in the pages of *The Morning After.*

At Princeton's Terrace Club, for example, "refuge of the fashionable, left-leaning, black-clad undergraduates," a sign proclaims: "What constitutes sexual harassment or an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment is to be defined by the person harassed and his/her own feelings of being threatened or compromised." Thanks to this kind of thinking, professorial careers are being ruined over charges of sexual harassment as due process is disregarded by administrations yielding to political pressure, and innocent young men are accused falsely at "Take Back the Night" speak-outs.

To her credit, Roiphe is distressed that many feminists actually excuse all this, on the ground that the system is so stacked against women that men need no protection, or that the larger truth of female degradation is being properly conveyed even if the details are not in every instance literally true. As she herself observes with some wonder:

> Although the rhetoric and statistics may be the stuff of airy political visions, they also affect real students and real financial decisions on college campuses. Universities channel money and resources, rooms, energy, and ideas into rape-counseling and -education programs.

Just so. Hence it is more likely that feminists will rework the entire landscape of America (remember those blue lights) than that women will be forced to wear veils.

BUT if our new sexual commissars listen too closely for women's complaints, it seems that Roiphe may not listen closely enough. A relatively uncritical believer in progress, she does not notice what her own study suggests: that some aspects of Grandma's world may have been quite wise after all, or at least based upon an understanding of female nature woefully lacking today. For behind the newly discovered sexual vulnerability which women report, there lies something that birth control, abortion, careers, financial independence, sex manuals, and "that *Cosmopolitan* girl" have not quite obviated or offset. Indeed, the hysteria over rape and sexual harassment—irrational and in many cases inexcusable as it may be—is surely prompted in large part by a quite rational reaction to the decline in civility, the cheapening of sex, and the denial of the feminine that are rooted in movements begun in the 1960's.

It is hard for Roiphe to see this because to her the idea of female purity is just about completely devoid of significance. She mocks the "quasi-religious value" attached to it, and puzzles over what she sees as the Victorian notions of "defilement" which women in the anti-rape movement claim to feel. Yet even if much of what now passes for date rape is not really rape, is it ridiculous that a young woman might feel sullied afterward by a casual act of sexual intercourse she never genuinely wanted?

Roiphe is perfectly right to emphasize the need for individual responsibility; but one nevertheless understands that women want also to feel a sense of cultural support—some awareness of the difference of their sexual makeup, some sense of being respected *as women* by men (to say nothing of the benefit this would confer on young men). The date-rape literature harps on the problems girls have in saying *no* forcefully enough, and the "experts" attribute this to low self-esteem. But it clearly has more to do with a cultural climate in which sex is easy, expected, "no big deal."

The rape-crisis movement refuses to admit the true sources of the problem. For to do so would mean admitting the part feminism, including Katie Roiphe's brand of feminism, has played in creating it—by promoting an ideal of sexual equality which in many ways does violence to women's needs; by mocking the traditional asymmetric emphasis on feminine purity which was at least based on an understanding of deep feminine feelings; by ridiculing the little courtesies men used to extend; and by inviting, even demanding, that men think of women as just female versions of themselves. All of this has gone a long way toward making men more predatory and women more confused.

Instead of facing any of this, feminism indicts the entire male sex as guilty until proven . . . guilty. And as the fabric of attachment between men and women is progressively destroyed, the ensuing pain and chaos become arguments for more feminism: more programs and campaigns and syn-

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dromes and crises and traumas and epidemics, and, unbelievably enough, more demands for legislatively enforced "equality."

ENTER Catharine A. MacKinnon, prominent law professor and feminist theorist and herself the author of a pertinent new book, *Only Words.** In many ways Catharine MacKinnon is also the *éminence terrible* of *The Morning After.* For it is she, according to Katie Roiphe, who has fostered many of the ideas that constitute the rape/harassment-crisis mentality: the "hostile-environment" standard for sexual harassment; the subjective definition of rape as "whenever a woman feels violated"; the equation of even ordinary sex with rape; the habit of indicting whole groups. During the date-rape trial of William Kennedy Smith, for example, MacKinnon argued (in words quoted by Roiphe) that "the truth of a given accusation should be weighed in the larger political balance: did this member of a group sexually trained to woman-hating aggression commit this particular act of woman-hating aggression?"

But even as she paints a world in which women are sexual prey, stalked, degraded, humiliated, defiled, MacKinnon, too, is unwilling to conclude that men and women have differing natures. Rather, her remedies are framed in terms of legalistic notions of "equality" that will supposedly offset the political "oppression" which she interprets as the source of the problem.

Indeed, MacKinnon seems incapable of seeing *anything* except through the lens of equality and inequality. "Pornography is sex inequality," she has written, "prostitution is sex inequality," child pornography is based on inequality, poverty is a matter of inequality, the main issue in education is inequality, the problem with group defamation is that it promotes inequality, and even genocide is the "ultimate inequality." Sometimes the word "equality" is syntactically deployed by her as if it were an entity or personage in its own right, as in: "What is wrong with pornography is that it hurts women and their equality."

Although it may seem to some that Catharine MacKinnon has done more than her fair share of feminist damage to the social fabric, her new book was actually written out of frustration that U.S. courts have in some cases ruled, on First Amendment grounds, against the kind of legislation she has been promoting—namely, prosecution of pornography as a violation of the equality and the civil rights of women, and the imposition of campus speech codes to ensure "equal access to education on the basis of race and sex." Her ideal is to make equality "a compelling state interest that can . . . outweigh First Amendment rights in certain settings," leading to "a new model for freedom of expression in which the free-speech position no longer supports social dominance."

In other words, instead of recognizing the equality of all individuals before the law, MacKinnon wants us to recognize the *in*equality of certain *groups* before the law, and to promote greater equality among them through court rulings outlawing what she designates as the "practice of discrimination in verbal" or "expressive" form.

IRONICALLY, as with the date-rape/sexual-harassment hysteria, one can find in MacKinnon's concerns a grain of truth that demands sympathy. Many conservatives have watched with dismay as increasingly disgusting pornography is ever more widely purveyed under free-speech protection. This is why some of MacKinnon's strongest allies in her efforts to secure civil-rights legislation against pornography have been groups on the religious Right.

Yet in the Orwellian world mandated by her vision of "equality," MacKinnon would suppress ideas that are at least debatable (including some espoused by the religious Right) along with ideas that are totally disreputable. At one point she lumps together arguments "that some races or genders or *sexual persuasions* are inferior to others" (emphasis added). Elsewhere she lists as offensive "academic books purporting to document women's biological inferiority to men, or arguing that slavery of Africans should return, or that the Fourteenth Amendment equality should be repealed, or that reports of rape are routinely fabricated." No citations are given, but one greatly longs to know which "academics" are arguing, for example, that Africans be returned to slavery.

"Legal attempts to suppress [such] books should not be precluded on the grounds that the ideas contained in them cannot be assumed false," MacKinnon writes, adopting the "ignorance is strength" inspiration of Orwell's *1984.* And in a dictum worthy of the barn wall in *Animal Farm,* she assures us that adopting her model of group equality as a constitutional mandate will "not mean that ideas to the contrary cannot be debated or expressed," but "should mean . . . that social inferiority cannot be imposed through any means, including expressive ones." Get that difference?

MacKinnon's work is a symptom of a larger syndrome operating in the culture today, manifest also in the rape/harassment-crisis movement. Traditional moral structures having been shredded by countercultural assaults, the only acceptable guiding principles today are those framed in terms of power politics and "minority" imperatives—"rights," "equality," "victimization," "oppression," and so forth. Not only the whole range of subtle interactions in the relationship between the sexes, but all the complex dynamics of being human at all, have been reduced to politicized group factionalism. If this stunted view of human existence were systematically codified into law, it would really mark the end of a free society.

IN SOME ways the ideals of Katie Roiphe and Catharine MacKinnon, otherwise exact opposites, are curiously linked. They both want equality. But Roiphe wants hers based on freedom, detached from onerous traditions and unbuttressed by protective political movements. Even as she looks for-

* Harvard, 112 pp., $14.95.

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ward to such a world, however, she expresses anxiety at its lack of certainties, anchors, and landmarks, and acknowledges how this kind of vacuum can create a susceptibility to forces, like the rape-crisis movement, that promise more order.

Exactly so. The more the world is shorn of legitimate guidelines based on an understanding of the limits, structures, and nuances of human existence, the more will people look to protective mechanisms that can shield them from the Hobbesian war of all against all thereby unleashed—and the more the MacKinnons of our time will succeed. The trouble with Katie Roiphe is that she sees MacKinnonism as a problem that can be overcome without changing the conditions that led to it—and that will never happen.

Le Carré in Russian Eyes

Walter Laqueur

JOHN LE CARRÉ's faithful followers in this country have found the master at the top of his form in his most recent novel, *The Night Manager*.* This, however, is a curious thing, for as more than one observer has had occasion to note over the last few years, the whole genre of the spy novel is in trouble, le Carré included. Without the cold war, the Soviet Union, and East Germany, and with the CIA out of the picture, what is there to write about? Who are the good guys and who are the bad guys? For a little while, South Africa may have seemed to offer fruitful ground for writers of a "progressive" bent, and then there was always Israel. But the South Africans have mended their ways, and as for Israel-as-bad-guy, no one has much wanted to be associated, even by implication, with that nation's all-too-real and all-too-unpleasant enemies, from Iraq's Saddam Hussein to the heirs of Khomeini in Iran to Islamic fundamentalists all over the Middle East.

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Some ten years ago, after the publication of *The Little Drummer Girl*, I took note in COMMENTARY of the excessive praise being heaped on le Carré (in America, not in England).† Some critics were comparing him favorably with Balzac and Stendhal, while others hailed him as one of the great moral and political philosophers of our time, and a psychologist of rare depth. To me, although I considered le Carré among the more skillful practitioners of his genre, such claims seemed ludicrous. And above all, perhaps, his political judgments struck me as, to put it mildly, ill-informed. True, most spy writers have preposterous politics, but by and large they do not expect to be taken seriously; le Carré, by contrast, was a man of large intellectual pretensions.

He still is, and his admirers still admire him for it. Thus, the reviewer of *The Night Manager* in the *New York Times* praised le Carré for having taken a nuanced approach to the East-West conflict: "unlike so many of the 'evil-empire' experts on the cold war, he avoided simplistic answers about both sides." Well, not quite. In fact, le Carré was an uncompromising enemy of Western "cold warriors," and expressed a marked dislike for Americans in general. In his novels of the cold-war years, American intelligence services—in contrast to the KGB— were staffed by idiots and/or fascistic puritans, both equally the objects of authorial loathing.

Ten years later, le Carré seems to have softened a bit. According to an interview in *Time* (July 5), he now thinks that Americans have "the energy and the record and the right" to conduct a global "altruistic crusade." But about his own past record le Carré has had no second thoughts, as the title of the interview, "We Distorted Our Own Minds," aptly suggests. "We did entrench anti-Communism," he declares, "in ways that were catastrophic. Any good journalist living in Moscow in the later years of Brezhnev would know that nothing worked anymore." In retrospect, le Carré adds modestly, he could even kick *himself* for having "contributed to the myth of the intelligence services as being very good."

Really? As it happens, there was

* Knopf, 429 pp., $24.00.

† "Le Carré's Fantasies," June 1983.

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never any such "myth" in the first place. And even if there were, le Carré could hardly be accused of having contributed to it; on the contrary, he did everything in his power to subvert it. That he regarded anti-Communism as "catastrophic" was plain enough from his books. As for the idea that "nothing worked" in the Soviet Union in the Brezhnev era, this may have been plain to "any good journalist," but it was far from plain at the time to John le Carré, whose respectful portraits of the workings of the Brezhnev-era KGB have latterly become a source of bemused speculation in the ex-Soviet Union itself.

OVER the years, I used to wonder what Russian readers would make of le Carré's books if they ever had the chance to read them. Would it be, for them, like *Alice in Wonderland*? Would they be amused; angry; both at once? Following the Russian earthquake of the last few years, we now have an answer.

During the early days of Mikhail Gorbachev's glasnost, le Carré became fashionable for a little while in the Soviet Union, as *Russia House* (1989) and other novels were translated into Russian. Then, as things went further and Soviet readers had an opportunity to take a closer look at his fiction, the negative reaction became quite violent. In general, Russian critics have drawn parallels between Western espionage thrillers and the worst kind of homegrown Soviet literature of the Stalinist period. This may seem exaggerated, but one has to bear in mind that writers like le Carré had been banned in the USSR, a fact which imparted an aura of authenticity to their reputations, if not to their work, that may in turn help to explain the intensity of today's counterreaction.

In the leading Russian journal *Literaturnaya Obozrenie* (Number 3, 1992), an essay entitled "Thou Shalt Not Make Graven Images" by Vladimir Lvov discusses the political views of several well-known Western spy novelists, including le Carré but also Martin Cruz Smith, Len Deighton, and Frederick Forsyth. Lvov's comments are devastating. He finds the whole genre fraudulent and stupid, damning Forsyth for his crude juxtapositions of a "good Brezhnev" and a "wise Andropov" with the "evil Suslov," and Martin Cruz Smith for bestowing legitimacy on the Brezhnev regime.

As for le Carré: how, asks Lvov, could he possibly have believed that the Soviet military-industrial complex was "indestructible and eternal"? What led him to accept at face value the official slogan of the KGB as "the brains, the honor, and the conscience" of the Soviet system? How could he have said after Andropov's death that the Soviet dictator and former head of the KGB had "turned a bunch of illiterate detectives into a highly qualified and highly cultivated intelligence service, able to accomplish any task anywhere in the world"? (Here I am translating from Lvov's Russian.) Why, in *Russia House*, the ridiculous valuation of the "mysterious Russian soul," an entity powerful enough to enable a Russian woman to "turn" the professional Western spy with whom she is in love?

IN SHORT, today's Russian appraisal of le Carré's cold-war writings is rather at variance with the memory of le Carré himself. And the variance is instructive. Lvov, asking why le Carré and the others went to such lengths to present the "human face" of Communism, ransacking the Soviet system for nonexistent signs of an "inner kinship with Western democracy and openness," comes to the conclusion that people in the West actually knew very little about what was going on behind the Iron Curtain, and perhaps did not want to know.

The latter, at any rate, is true enough. Nor were Western spy novelists the only ones suffering from such self-imposed delusions; to their ranks one must add pundits and statesmen, church officials and spokesmen for international organizations. For their part, Soviet observers always tended somewhat wishfully to overestimate the degree of Western awareness and sophistication, and to underrate not only Western ignorance but, more importantly, Western self-deceit.

Lvov begins his essay by describing how, as a child in Novosibirsk during World War II, he was taken to the local cinema to see Michael Curtiz's *Mission to Moscow* and other such American movies. What would he say now if he knew that *Mission to Moscow*, arguably the most scandalous apology for the Moscow trials and the Stalin terror ever produced by Hollywood, is still shown on American television? One standard guide gives it 3.5 stars out of a possible four ("fascinating propaganda, well done"), while another calls it "interesting either as an expressive object or as pure movie, quite beautifully put together by Curtiz."

A Russian, being a Russian, might see a deep conspiracy at work here, rather than (mainly) stupidity. But contemplating the persistence of Western gullibility about the Communist system, a condition to which John le Carré in his time made a contribution for which he is still reaping praise, one is almost moved to apologize retroactively to Leni Riefenstahl. At least Hitler's favorite movie director and the creator of *Triumph of the Will* never made a film glorifying Auschwitz.

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Nationalism & Its Discontents

PANDAEMONIUM: ETHNICITY IN INTERNATIONAL POLITICS. By DANIEL PATRICK MOYNIHAN. *Oxford University Press. 221 pp. $19.95.*

Reviewed by RICHARD PIPES

PANDAEMONIUM, in Milton's *Paradise Lost*, is the capital of hell. In Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan's latest book, it designates the ethnic turmoil engulfing the world in the 20th century. Moynihan's purpose is both to censure the shortsightedness of the world's leaders for failing to foresee this turmoil and to warn of its abiding dangers.

In the 19th century, it was generally expected that the amalgamation of the world's economies would cause nationalism to subside and ultimately to disappear. Socialists, in particular, regarded nationalism as a by-product of capitalist competition for markets and a weapon which capitalists used to divert the working class from its true international interests. Marx and Engels had no patience with the claims of the small nationalities inhabiting the great European empires, whose destiny it was, they believed, to assimilate and vanish. For liberals, nationalism was doomed by the operations of an integrating world market; for socialists, by the brotherhood of the international proletariat.

It did not happen that way. The 20th century turned out to be an age of rampant nationalism afflicting as much the great powers as the tutti-frutti of the Balkans scorned by Marx. Why this should be so is one of the fascinating questions of our time. Several causes come to mind, none sufficient and yet each, in some measure, necessary.

One explanation lies in the triumph of democracy and the attendant spread of mass education. The universal franchise has shifted the center of decision-making to the regions, giving rise to local politics which, in areas inhabited by ethnically diverse populations, assume ethnic forms: conflicts which in nationally homogeneous societies express themselves in social terms, here take on an ethnic coloring. The principle of popular sovereignty in and of itself institutionalizes national differences. Mass education further promotes ethnicity because, being geared to a lower level than elite education and having more pragmatic aims, it stresses the local and familiar at the expense of the universal.

At a deeper level, national conflict is but one expression of the "territorial imperative" that distinguishes the behavior of all creatures, from protozoa to primates. Survival depends on the bounty of nature: among nondomesticated animals totally, among humans in part, depending on the level of economic and scientific development. People identify with their homeland because it nourishes them. Just as birds chase away other birds that encroach on their nesting and feeding area, and primitive hunters and food gatherers drive out, if they do not kill, trespassers, so do otherwise civilized people assault and murder those whom they perceive as encroaching on their territory.

These are hard realities, embedded in the nature of living beings. It is futile either to ignore or rail against them. It is far more useful to devise ways that will encourage people to stay put in their native habitat. The current *Völkerwanderung* which results in the annual migration of tens of millions is fraught with the most horrendous possibilities of mass slaughter as native inhabitants defend their territory from the invaders.

It is to Senator Moynihan's credit that he was among the earliest statesmen in this country to realize the destructive potential of ethnic discord. Both Washington and the Sovietological community were deaf to warnings that the multinational Soviet empire was bound, sooner or later, to meet the fate of all the other European empires and disintegrate.

Forty years ago, I offered a course on Soviet nationalities at Harvard—the first of its kind at my university and probably in the country. At the opening lecture six students turned up, two of whom promptly rose and left, explaining that they had wandered into the wrong classroom. In the 50's, 60's, and 70's, whether advising the radio stations that broadcast to the USSR or the Department of State, I found it impossible to convince anyone in authority that the USSR was not a free comity of nations, like the United States, but an empire held together by Russian Communists.

Whether this refusal to listen stemmed from ignorance, from Russophilia, or from the fear that an agglomeration of ex-Soviet colonies would cause more trouble than a Russian empire, it is hard to tell. As late as August 1991, days before Ukraine proclaimed its independence, President Bush, echoing Gorbachev, on a visit to Kiev sought to persuade the Ukrainians to find happiness under Russian rule. The *New York Times* still seems unable to reconcile itself to the fact that the Soviet Union is no more, playing up every disaster that has befallen the separated republics and ignoring the benefits that sovereignty has brought them.

Moynihan's written prose, like his speech, is not a tranquil stream but a cascading torrent of ideas, citations, asides, and allusions. It is no easy matter to discern the cen-

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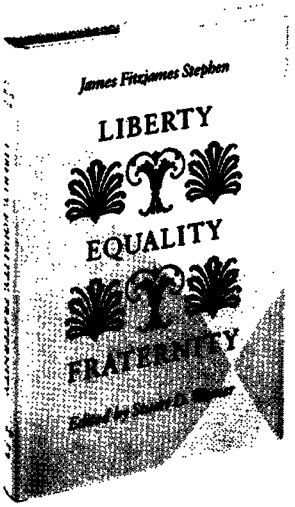

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tral message in this teeming flow. The impression is one of a contradiction. Moynihan insists on the overriding importance of ethnic consciousness in our age, and at the same time laments it. The realistic observer and the moralist seem at odds with each other.

A PROFOUND pessimism pervades the book. Moynihan cites, apparently with approval, Sir Isaiah Berlin to the effect that the 20th century is the "worst century that Europe has ever had" and how glad he (Berlin) is to be as old as he is. And the reason for the gloom is the prevalence of nationalism and racism. Moynihan does not see the process of ethnic subdivision and conflict abating in the years ahead, especially in Africa and Asia. The prospect, therefore, is of new global tension, no longer polarized between two ideological blocs but diffuse and, therefore, even more difficult to control.

I fully subscribe to Moynihan's warnings that nationalism and the conflicts to which it gives rise are not a relic of the past but a living reality of the present and the foreseeable future. For the Western powers which wallowed in nationalistic passions for a century and a half, experienced their baneful consequences, and finally learned to keep them under control, it is easy to look down on nations which are only now becoming aware of their identity. Although the inhabitants of the earth live from day to day by the same clock, the clock of history shows different times for different peoples.

That said, the question remains: how can ethnic conflicts be contained? For this to happen, the great powers, which even in the era of the United Nations continue to run the world, must realize the deleterious effects of mass migrations. The defense of ethnic values and of the national territory should not be abandoned to the radical Right. The emergence in Germany and France of neo-Nazi movements is primarily due to the inability (or perhaps unwillingness) of liberals and socialists to acknowledge as legitimate the resistance of their fellow-citizens to the massive influx of foreigners. Fortunately, this has now changed as both Germany and France have taken measures to slow down the entry of immigrants, a phenomenon which has helped reignite nationalist passions one had hoped the two world wars had dissipated once and for all.

As for the rest of the world—Yugoslavia, Transcaucasia, Sri Lanka, and the many other regions where ethnic discord assumes forms akin to genocide—there is probably no other solution than to have the great powers step in forcefully to stop the slaughter. They are reluctant to do so, arguing that such violence, regrettable as it is, does not affect their vital national interests. But this is true only in a very superficial sense, on a narrow definition of national interest—in the sense in which the fate of German Jews under Hitler, or the fate of Czechoslovakia, menaced by the German dictator, did not affect the interests of Great Britain. Who, old enough to remember, can forget Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain dismissing the German ultimatum to Czechoslovakia as a "quarrel in a faraway country between people of whom we know nothing"? He and his countrymen found out soon enough who those people were, and what their "quarrel" meant to Britain.

It is hypocritical to speak of one world, as we routinely do, and confine it to the major industrial powers. Conflicts among nations have a way of spilling from their place of origin, no matter how remote: they poison the political climate and discredit the great powers who are unwilling to use their might to give substance to their lofty professions. In this manner, ultimately, inaction affects adversely everyone's security.

SENATOR MOYNIHAN represents the country's second most populous state and currently serves as chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, in which capacity he carries out important negotiations on the budget. It is remarkable and certainly uncommon for a person with these responsibilities to have the vision and find the time to concern himself seriously with global issues of such complexity.

The Path Not Taken

ASSIMILATION VERSUS SEPARATION: JOSEPH THE ADMINISTRATOR AND THE POLITICS OF RELIGION IN BIBLICAL ISRAEL. By AARON WILDAVSKY. *Transaction. 236 pp. $32.95.*

Reviewed by LEON R. KASS

TO ASSIMILATE or to stay apart? That is the question which for centuries has confronted Jews living in the Diaspora. How much may the children of Israel become like their host nations, in order to live securely and to prosper? Once upon a time, indeed until only yesterday, this was mainly a question of how much to accommodate powerful and hostile political rulers who threatened the literal survival of Jewish subjects. Today, especially in America and other "enlightened" societies, it is mainly a question of how much to resist powerful and seductive cultural temptations—for example, of lobster, luxury, and loose living—which threaten the spiritual and moral survival of no-longer-persecuted Jewish citizens. Yet despite the changing scene, the basic question persists: how to square the demands of survival, the attractions of worldly success, and the need to live in exile with the call to be a righteous and holy people?

In *Assimilation versus Separation*, Aaron Wildavsky seeks to show that this difficulty has plagued Jewish life from its earliest beginnings. Subtitled "Joseph the Administrator and the Politics of Religion in Biblical Israel," his book offers a thoroughgoing and illuminating commentary on the Joseph narrative in Genesis. The main purpose of that narrative, according to Wildavsky, is to show the limits of worldly wisdom and the superiority of cleaving to God's ways. Joseph, the brilliant administrator, takes the path of assimilation and prepares the way for the

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enslavement of his people; he is thus the Jewish anti-hero, the perfect foil for Moses the liberator who brought the Jews out of the house of bondage and made of them a separate, God-fearing people. "The rejection of Joseph, that is, of assimilation as the price of survival," says Wildavsky,

> is a turning point in the development of Judaism. . . . Because the path chosen makes more sense contrasted with the path not taken, we have the lifetime story of Joseph as our guide to what is *not* permissible for Jews to do in order to survive.

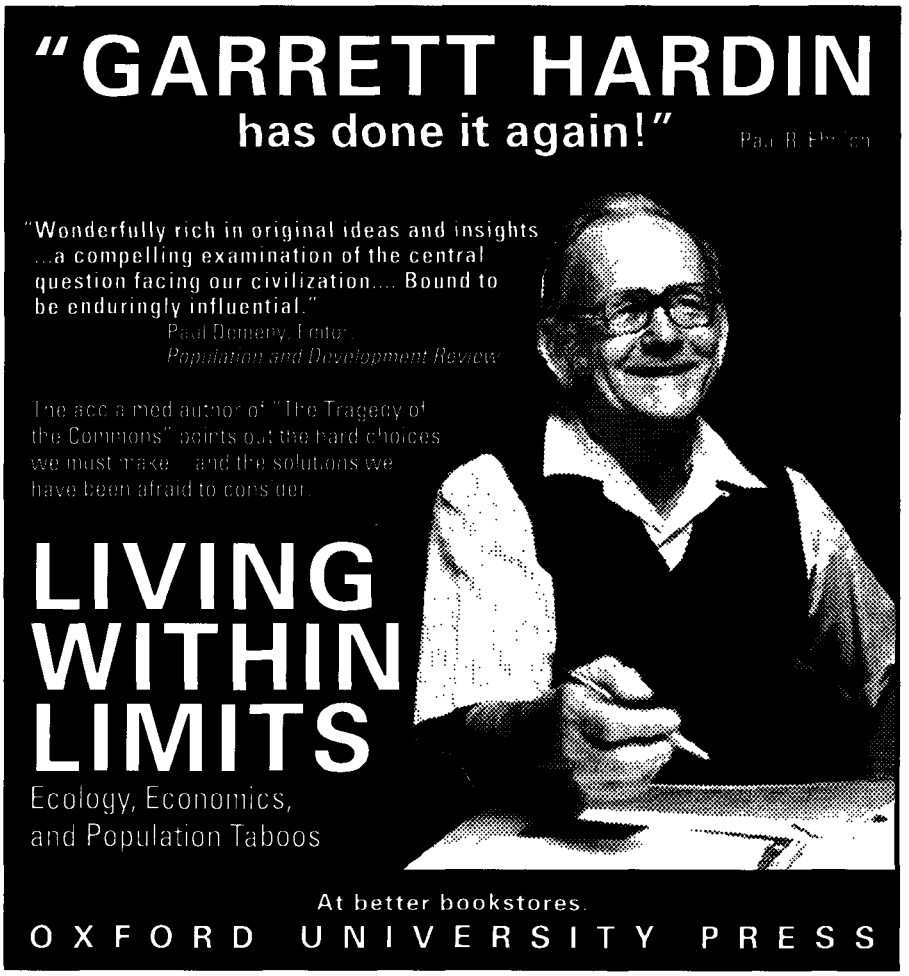
This is no crude hatchet job. On the contrary, Wildavsky, a professor of political science and public policy at Berkeley and a prolific author on the widest range of topics, has drawn a complex, subtle, and compelling portrait of Joseph by means of meticulous study of the Genesis text and "conversations" with other interpreters, traditional and modern. Though he deftly marshals the evidence for his own reading, he gives careful and respectful attention to the alternatives, which, not dismissed, continue to live in his pages. As with his earlier book on Moses (*The Nursing Father: Moses as a Political Leader*), he succeeds in his aim "to make 'the Midrash,' the commentary on the Bible, live in our time as it has in earlier days." In Wildavsky's able hands, commentary is once again displayed as what the late Gershom Scholem called "the characteristic expression of Jewish thinking about truth." Thanks to this commentary, it should now be permanently impossible for anyone interested in truth to see Joseph simply as a hero in Israel.

In the opening two chapters, leading up to the Joseph story proper, Wildavsky introduces two central principles crucial to his interpretation: "no foreigner can control Israel" (i.e., only God can) and "survival must not be gained through sin." These principles Wildavsky extracts, respectively, from the wife-sister stories involving Abraham and Isaac and from the stories of Judah and Tamar, Ruth and Naomi, Joseph and Mrs. Potiphar. I found these chapters the weakest in the book, despite the fine insights they contain, because they do not persuade me that these stories are best read as teaching those principles.

To cite only one difficulty: Wildavsky argues that "the story of Judah and Tamar is a preview of the lesson of the Joseph stories, which is that leaders cannot save their people by violating the moral law." But how can one violate the moral law when it has not yet been given? To speak about moral law and sin is here largely anachronistic; the children of Israel in the time of Joseph are bound only by the Noahide law, by God's covenant with and promise to the patriarchs, and by the one specifically Jewish commandment, circumcision. The stories of Genesis are in my view better read as making clear the *need* for law, by showing the moral ambiguity of uninstructed human ways and the great idolatrous temptations of the human heart. In Genesis, the nascent Jewish way is more a matter of attitude and worldly orientation, attentive to God's solicitous and awesome presence, than of any specified morality or prescribed way of life.

THE book's central chapters on Joseph himself are superb. Wildavsky analyzes Joseph's dreams and dream-interpretations, his relations with his family, his Egyptianization (which is compared to the Hebraicization of Daniel and Esther), and his work as administrator, concluding with a discussion of Jacob's blessings of his sons that shows them to be more like curses. The moral and spiritual ambiguity of Joseph is made crystal-clear, from his boyhood dreams of domination and his lording it over his brothers to the grief he willingly caused his father by the testing of the brothers in Egypt; from his easy adoption of foreign ways in his rise to power to the exploitation, dislocation, and enslavement of the Egyptian people in his sale of grain during the famine.

This last is, for Wildavsky, particularly telling against Joseph: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> Joseph left the system into which he was elevated less humane than it was by making Pharaoh more powerful than he had been. . . . Acting so as to make Pharaoh's rule more autocratic, even less dependent on the people than before, is way above what an administrator owes his chief.

Moreover, Wildavsky points out, Joseph sets the stage for the later Pharaoh "who knew not Joseph" and who would thus enslave the Hebrews: "How appropriate, . . . according to exact Hebrew justice, that the oppression of the Egyptians, which came from food Joseph stored, should be visited upon his descendants."

Though he considers carefully the case *for* Joseph, Wildavsky inclines more to the view that Joseph suffered from an excess of will-to-power: "Did Joseph do what he did . . . because he had come to think of himself as a god who could bring about the outcomes of his own dreams?" He notes the claims made several times by Joseph that God Himself is directing events, and that Joseph and the others are but instruments of a divine plan. But, Wildavsky observes, these claims are endorsed neither by the narrator nor by God Himself. Having noticed that Joseph never speaks or prays to God, is not spoken to by God, and swears an oath "by Pharaoh," Wildavsky shows that we must wonder whether Joseph has not confused the divine will with his own.

The book concludes with two chapters that show "Why Joseph-the-Assimilator is Superseded by Moses-the-Lawgiver" and why the way represented by Joseph (assimilation and immorality in the service of survival) is "The Path Not Taken." Most impressive is the collection of textual contrasts between Joseph and Moses, which are

> so vivid and so consistent that it can be said with confidence that Moses is explicitly, no doubt deliberately, crafted to be the anti-Joseph or vice versa. Moses is not so much to succeed Joseph as to reject everything he stood for. . . . The apostle of pure administrative power, Joseph-the-assimilator gives way to Moses-the-lawgiver.

WILDAVSKY's masterful interpretation of Joseph as representing the path not taken is, in my view, entirely correct. Indeed, I should confess that I was of this opinion even before reading his book, though now, thanks to it, I paradoxically see both richer ambiguity in Joseph's character and also more reasons to sustain a negative judgment. Yet—now to enter into conversation with the author—I am surprised that Wildavsky does not go farther.

For one thing, Wildavsky does not make enough of his own contrast between Joseph-the-administrator and Moses-the-political-leader. One would have thought that a political scientist would leap at the chance to expound the differences between administration and statesmanship, and to explore the soul types and world views to which they are related. In the person of Joseph, grand vizier of Egypt, the biblical author not only anticipated but as it were refuted the dream of Karl Marx that rule over men would eventually be replaced by the administration of things, once human intelligence (through the technological mastery of nature and the rationalized restructuring of society) overcomes scarcity and class conflict. This apolitical dream generally becomes a political nightmare, yielding not liberation but despotism.

Joseph, long on forethought and planning but short on understanding the souls of men, clairvoyantly intelligent but lacking in both eros and spiritedness (and hence without deep longings or a strong sense of justice), is the paradigmatic administrator, a man who does not *lead* human beings but can *manage* their affairs, a man who "ministers to" and serves someone above him but who often secretly believes that he himself is in charge. (Says Joseph to his brothers, "He [God] hath made me a father to Pharaoh and lord of all his house and ruler over the land of Egypt.")

But ruling the land and managing its produce is very far from governing the hearts and minds of men who, from the Bible's point of view, are made miserable more because of their own evil imaginings than because of the stinginess of nature. As Wildavsky shows, Joseph's administrative genius, devoted to the preservation of mere life, leads not to freedom but to slavery, first for the Egyptians and later for his own people through the despotic power which his administrative genius has brought into being. It takes a Moses, a spirited and erotic man who is also capable of awe, to lead the people into freedom, not only from Egyptian rule but from their own destructive tendencies, primarily by the supreme act of statesmanship, the giving of law, informed by reverence for God.

ADMINISTRATORS, being neither statesmen nor priests, necessarily tend to assimilate. One cannot manage in Egypt without Egyptianizing and, given the administrator's world view, nothing of importance is lost in doing so. Indeed, as the biblical land of good and plenty, Egypt is the natural home for the administrative outlook and hence stands as the antithesis of—and *the* permanent alternative to—the Jewish way. Wildavsky sees that Egypt is bad because "it teaches obedience to an earthly, not a heavenly, ruler, to a Pharaoh who thinks he is a god." But he does not see fully what this means.

Biblical Egypt is civilization at its peak. Thanks both to the Nile and to highly developed technical and administrative skill, Egypt is an agricultural paradise, capable of sustaining the entire region. Civilization is based on what looks at first like the worship of nature (Joseph's father-in-law is the high priest of the sun god) but what turns out in fact to be closer to the mastery of nature—to manipulation rather than submission—through divination, magic, and rationalized technique. At bottom, Egyptian rationalization of the world seeks the denial or mastery of death, evidenced in the elaborate practice of embalming. In Egypt, man (Pharaoh is but the exemplar) naturally goes in place of God.

In Egypt, Joseph the administrator fits right in; I would say he was destined to fit in from the start. For young Joseph has an

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Egyptian soul that dreams "Egyptian dreams." Do wandering shepherds dream of *sheaves of wheat*? Do God-fearing and -revering men dream of ruling the sun, the moon, and the stars?

GENESIS begins with an account of creation that denies the dignity and divinity of the heavenly bodies; the teaching of creation is the opening round in the Bible's attempt to turn men away from nature and toward righteousness and holiness. Genesis ends with Egypt, a society obsessed with nature, the highest civilization attained by those who do not know the truth about creation or the Creator's moral and holy goals for human beings. And, in its very last words, Genesis tells of the mummification of Joseph the gifted, who saved life through his cleverness but who was permanently lost to God and to his people, and who—necessarily even if unintentionally—prepared their 400 years of servitude.

The story of Joseph and Egypt is thus not only a lesson about how to live in the Diaspora, but about how to live altogether. It is finally not only about assimilation under foreign rule, but about yielding to the most powerful and permanent human temptation: the prideful belief in human self-sufficiency. Today, thanks especially to liberalism, the Enlightenment, and the power of modern technology, Jews everywhere—and not only Jews—remain in grave danger of Egyptianizing.

The Baseball Business

PLAY BALL: THE LIFE AND TROUBLED TIMES OF MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL. By JOHN FEINSTEIN. *Villard Books. 425 pp. $22.50.*

Reviewed by JAY P. LEFKOWITZ

THE sports journalist John Feinstein, whose previous books include in-depth looks at the worlds of college basketball and professional tennis, here chronicles the 1992 major-league baseball season. Following the arc of the season itself, *Play Ball* begins with the cheerful optimism of spring training and opening day, continues through the dog days of summer and the commercialized All-Star-game recess, and concludes with the pennant races and the World Series. Interspersed throughout are chapters examining some of baseball's most controversial topics, including the volatile dynamic between ballplayers and the media, the dearth of minority managers and front-office personnel, and the ambiguous and often fractious role of baseball's Commissioner.

More than anything else, however, *Play Ball* is about business. Feinstein devotes much space to detailing the work of baseball's off-field generals, the owners and general managers. He recounts in detail the maneuvering that takes place behind the scenes as general managers try to trade away players who are either too expensive or otherwise considered troublesome. He also discusses the complex relation between baseball franchises and their host cities, and the manner in which teams blackmail cities into financing new stadiums by threatening to go elsewhere. And he focuses extensively on the players' salaries.

As his subtitle suggests, Feinstein believes that all is not well in Mudville. He claims, in fact, that "these are ugly times if you love baseball," if not "the most difficult times baseball has ever faced." Specifically, he charges that baseball is neither economically sound nor sufficiently competitive to thrive as it should.

On the first charge, Feinstein is hardly convincing. Soaring payrolls notwithstanding, baseball ownership continues to be a profitable enterprise, with franchise values rising year after year. The Seattle Mariners, for example, who were bought for $13.1 million in 1981, were recently sold for more than $100 million. And just last month, the Baltimore Orioles were sold for $173 million, the highest price ever paid for a professional sports team and over $100 million more than the team fetched only four years ago. When the National League announced that it would expand to allow two new franchises for the 1993 season, competition for ownership was fierce despite the $95-million initiation fee.

If baseball is in financial trouble, one would never know it from going to the ball park. Even as televised baseball reaches an ever-increasing audience, fans continue to flock to the game in huge numbers. After declining by 1.6 percent last season, baseball attendance is rebounding strongly this year. Overall, more than twelve million additional fans will pay to see ball games this year than were in attendance ten years ago.

Baseball is also booming in some of its newest markets. The Toronto Blue Jays, a team that did not even exist prior to 1977, last year became the first team in the history of professional sports to draw over four million spectators in a single season. This year, the brand-new Colorado Rockies franchise reached the one-million spectator mark in its seventeenth home game, a new baseball record.

FEINSTEIN'S complaint about the decline of competition among baseball teams also rings hollow. He believes that the skyrocketing player salaries, multimillion-dollar cable-television contracts, and municipally-financed ball parks have destroyed the delicate balance that existed in the good old days—the days before expansion, the designated hitter, and free agency.

But once again the facts belie his thesis. Baseball is actually more competitive today than ever before. In the entire decade of the "good old" 1950's, for example, four franchises repeatedly won the World Series, and one team, the New York Yankees, captured eight of the ten American League pennants. By contrast, there have been thirteen different world champions during the past fifteen seasons, without a single repeat winner.

Feinstein blames the alleged decline in competition among teams on the salaries of today's players, particularly the superstars. He refers disparagingly on several occasions to the $7 million per year recently paid by the San Francisco Giants to lure outfielder Barry

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Bonds away from the Pittsburgh Pirates.

It is true that salaries have risen dizzyingly, from an average of about $50,000 in 1976, the year that marked the advent of free agency (giving veteran players the opportunity to negotiate with the teams of their choice), to more than $1 million in 1992—and some players today earn upward of $5 million per year. But baseball's superstars have *always* been paid extraordinarily well, and there does not seem to be any correlation between salaries and win-loss records. As Feinstein himself points out, the Baltimore Orioles, with a payroll of a little more than $8 million, finished the 1992 season with more victories than the New York Mets, the Boston Red Sox, or the Los Angeles Dodgers, each of whom had payrolls roughly five times as great.

Feinstein's concern about salaries is related to his general worry that baseball has become too much business and too little game. One of his chief complaints concerns the rapidity with which players today jump from team to team. He writes: "The days when players stayed with one team for their entire careers are as far gone as the days of the 25-cent hot dog."

Yet while players switch teams more than in the days before their emancipation from the infamous reserve clause, which essentially made them the permanent property of their clubs, the fact is that throughout history, single-teamers were always the exception and not the rule. For every Joe DiMaggio, Stan Musial, and Ted Williams who spent an entire career in one city, there were a dozen like Babe Ruth, Rogers Hornsby, and Frank Robinson who played for several different teams. Bobo Newsom, a three-time twenty-game-winning pitcher whose career spanned parts of four decades, changed uniforms sixteen times.

FEINSTEIN is a consummate baseball fan with an almost reverential feeling for the game. Thus, despite his groaning about greedy players and stingy owners, he fully subscribes to the romantic view of Tony LaRussa, the manager of the Oakland A's: "Baseball is better than us all." But it could be even better, Feinstein believes, and to that end he has one overarching suggestion: revenue-sharing. It is here that he goes most off-track.

According to Feinstein, baseball's greatest structural problem is

> the lack of a level playing field. Over the long haul, teams in Seattle and Cleveland and Milwaukee simply cannot compete with teams in New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, and Atlanta until and unless there is revenue-sharing.

To bolster his case, Feinstein cites the net profit of $98 million earned by the 26 major-league teams in 1991, enough for each team to have come away with approximately $4 million in profits if the revenues had been shared. In Feinstein's view, this sort of arrangement would be "far more *equitable* and, in the end, [would make] the game far more competitive than having one team net $20 million while another team loses $15 million" (emphasis added).

Feinstein is dead wrong. He confuses competition with equity. Healthy competition is actually stimulated by inequities, by the desire to improve one's position. If, as Feinstein suggests, there is too little competition in baseball today (itself a dubious proposition), then greater revenue-sharing would only exacerbate the problem, as owners would lose much of their incentive to field winning clubs.

Some baseball revenues are already shared: the proceeds from television contracts, officially licensed baseball memorabilia, and new franchise fees. A move from this to complete revenue-sharing would surely have a devastating impact, bringing matters perilously close to the syndicated ownership which in the 1890's nearly turned baseball into an early version of 1990's-style "professional wrestling."

The story is worth recalling. In 1892, a gentleman named John B. Day owned the New York Giants. To raise money to keep his team afloat, Day exchanged shares of stock in the Giants with the owners of three other teams—the Chicago Colts, the Cincinnati Reds, and the Boston Beaneaters. This created an absurd situation in which the owners of three competing teams controlled the finances and fate of a fourth. Yet later in the decade, three more syndicates were formed, one joining the Cleveland and St. Louis clubs, another the Brooklyn and Baltimore teams, and a third Louisville and Pittsburgh.

Among the egregious anti-competitive excesses that resulted from these interlocking ownerships were the pooling and redistribution of players. For example, after the 1898 season, the owners of the Brooklyn-Baltimore syndicate decided that the following year they would strive for a pennant in Brooklyn. So they transferred batting champion Wee Willie Keeler and three twenty-game-winning pitchers to Brooklyn, leaving their poor-sister Baltimore team practically talent-free. Talk about an uncompetitive system!

Essentially, syndicated ownership created a hybrid major/minor-league system in which a single owner controlled both a competitive team and a farm club in the same league. Not surprisingly, the league's profits quickly dwindled from the lack of healthy competition, and interlocking ownerships were soon outlawed.

BASEBALL in the 1990's is big business. Since 1985, every major-league club has been backed by at least one major corporate entity, including a nationwide pizza franchise, an international brewery, several multimedia corporations, and a couple of shipbuilding companies. Yet unlike every other large private enterprise in the country, baseball is exempt from the anti-trust laws. This peculiar situation has given the owners a great deal of power over the players.

What baseball actually needs today is unfettered competition, not the managed competition that is the essence of Feinstein's plea for revenue-sharing and that would augment the power of the owners even more. Managed competition, whether in baseball or in health care, is an artificial, "equitable"

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substitute for the real thing. It is a euphemism for less competition, invoked by people who want to disguise their distrust of entrepreneurial initiative. Yet it is entrepreneurial initiative and not managed competition that explains why Branch Rickey's money-poor but imaginatively led St. Louis Cardinals were one of baseball's most successful franchises, while Tom Yawkey's wealthy Boston Red Sox won only one pennant. The time has come to lift baseball's exemption from the antitrust laws and allow the game to become subject to the same rules as other businesses—rules that promote competition.

It Began With the Vikings

A DIFFERENT MIRROR: A HISTORY OF MULTICULTURAL AMERICA. By RONALD TAKAKI. *Little, Brown. 508 pp. $27.95.*

Reviewed by JOHN J. MILLER

TO HEAR Ronald Takaki, a professor of ethnic studies at Berkeley, tell it, America's problems with multiculturalism began, literally, on day one. Minutes after the Vikings landed on a beach in Vinland ten centuries ago, they slaughtered a group of Indians attempting to hide nearby.

From this first encounter until the 1990's, Takaki sees nothing but a long trail of suffering, discrimination, and violence.

Although ostensibly aiming to affirm America's racial diversity, what *A Different Mirror* mostly offers is a history of ethnic persecution, from the federal government's cheating of Choctaw Indians out of their ancestral homes in Georgia, to the long hours of drudgery endured by Irish domestic servants, to the job losses suffered disproportionately by blacks during the Depression.

What all oppressed groups in America share, Takaki concludes, is just this sordid legacy of discrimination. Landowning whites may have begun the process by portraying Indians and blacks as savages forever outside the reach of civilization, but once under way, this unstoppable and systematic "demonization" relentlessly "set a course for the making of a national identity in America for centuries to come."

Takaki's "history" proceeds largely by anecdote, relying on obscure poems, diary entries, and newspaper accounts to flesh out his portrait of America as a bleak sinkhole of wasted efforts and futile hopes. For the most part Takaki draws heavily from secondary sources and adds little in the way of new scholarship. What he does add, loudly and clearly, is another shrill voice to the leftist multicultural chorus.

Fully five of Takaki's twelve historical chapters focus on the travails of Indians and blacks, an emphasis that itself contributes mightily to the impression of America as a failed experiment. But even when he comes, for instance, to American Jews, Takaki says virtually nothing about their record of economic and cultural achievement; the last we hear of them in this book, Jews are still the victims of anti-Semitic housing discrimination in New York and still widely barred from universities. Similarly, Takaki details the problems of early Irish immigrants without so much as mentioning their subsequent assimilation into American life. And he totally ignores the experiences of Eastern and Southern Europeans.

Hispanics receive a lopsided treatment as well. Takaki devotes himself only to the hardships of the immigrant generations, ignoring the gains made by second- and third-generation Hispanics throughout the 20th century. Not surprisingly, he makes no mention of Cuban-Americans and their stunning achievements. Nor, in general, does he ask why, in light of the ruthless discrimination he laboriously chronicles, America continues to draw a million *new* immigrants to its borders each year.

A SOLID study of Asian-Americans, the area of Takaki's purported expertise (he is the author of a previous book on the subject, *Strangers from a Different Shore*), would provide a good opportunity for showing how the American system can work for nonwhites. Instead, Takaki delivers a diatribe against those who would call Asian-Americans a "model minority." He dwells almost exclusively on the hurdles faced by the immigrant generation: language barriers, low levels of education, isolation from mainstream society. The reader will learn nothing here about all the high-school valedictorians and hardworking entrepreneurs—nor, for that matter, about the quotas restricting the admission of Asian-Americans to some of our best universities. Although Takaki does allow that "many Asian-Americans are doing well," he neglects to specify how well: the highest median household income, the highest percentage of college graduates, the highest percentage of scientific and managerial jobs, the lowest divorce rate, and the lowest unemployment rate of any racial or ethnic group in the country, including whites.

But Takaki has another agenda in mind in denouncing the "model-minority" idea: he calls it a sinister ploy to "discipline blacks." The stereotype of Asian-American success, Takaki argues, has received wide currency because our society "needs" it, because we are living "in an era anxious about a growing black underclass." Making his point in, apparently, the only way he can, he stoops to blatant misquotation. "While congratulating Asian-Americans for their family values, hard work, and high incomes," he writes, "President Ronald Reagan chastised blacks" for their reliance on welfare. But Takaki's own footnotes show that Reagan never drew this invidious comparison between blacks and Asian-Americans; the link is Takaki's, yoking two disparate sources set apart by more than six months.

ANYONE who makes his way to the end of this disgraceful book must wonder: if our multicultural past is as replete with racist treachery, and as devoid of promise or hope, as Takaki alleges, how but with terror can we view our increasingly multi-

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cultural future? Although Takaki blandly assures us that "we have nothing to fear but our fear of our own diversity," his book offers no grounds for thinking this country can accept even modest amounts of racial and ethnic diversity. His own solution to this dilemma lies in a bit of New-Age wisdom: "what we need to do is to stop denying our wholeness as members of humanity as well as one nation." But the only denier hereabouts is Ronald Takaki; the rest of us, with whatever necessary qualifications, can take pride in the knowledge that the American experiment actually works.

Profile in Courage

DAYS OF GRACE: A MEMOIR. By ARTHUR ASHE and ARNOLD RAMPERSAD. *Knopf. 366 pp. $24.00.*

Reviewed by ARCH PUDDINGTON

Days of Grace is not a traditional memoir but rather a collection of observations on sports, race, patriotism, sexual ethics, the individual's obligation to his family, and coping with terminal illness—in Arthur Ashe's case, AIDS contracted through a blood transfusion. The tone is dry, intensely rational, and somewhat aloof; to the very end of his life this past February, the late tennis champion refused to succumb to the bitterness we have come to associate with the personal accounts of AIDS victims.

All in all, this book reinforces the impression that Ashe's demise has deprived America of one of its most gifted and worthy citizens. To some degree, no doubt, its power derives from its having been written under a sentence of death. The AIDS virus had already reached an advanced stage when the book was begun in 1992, and Ashe endured bouts of debilitating sickness and fatigue during the writing process, working right up to his death. (The finishing touches were added by his widow, Jeanne, and his collaborator, Arnold Rampersad.) In the end, *Days of Grace* is a strong statement about the importance of traditional values, individual achievement, and courage in the face of impending death.

ASHE was raised in Richmond, Virginia, during the waning years of segregation. His mother died when he was seven, and the dominant influence in his life was thus his father, a disciplinarian of the old school who worked hard to provide the material needs of his family, fretted over his children's safety, and instilled by word and example a set of values which seems to have served Arthur Ashe well throughout his life.

Ashe tells us that "of all my possessions, my reputation means most to me," and notes that he also tried to live up to the stricture set down by his father: "Don't do anything you couldn't tell your mother about." These maxims, which many would regard as embarrassingly quaint, formed the basis of his code of behavior; although he does not say so directly, he seems to believe that they are good ideas for others to follow as well.

Ashe was also driven by an exemplary work ethic, whether the activity was a championship match, coaching the Davis Cup squad, writing books on the history of the black athlete, or raising a family. Thus, while he admires activist athletes like John Carlos, the American track medalist who stunned the 1968 Mexico City Olympics by giving the Black Power salute on the victory stand, he identifies more closely with overachievers like himself, whether white or black, among them Bill Bradley, the former New York Knicks basketball star and current U.S. Senator.

Nowhere did the Ashe code of personal conduct face a greater test than in his years as captain of the U.S. Davis Cup team. For Ashe, appointment as Cup captain—a position tantamount to coach—was extremely important. His playing days had just been prematurely ended by a major heart attack, and he was actively seeking new challenges. In addition, Ashe identified America's quest for the Cup—the highest international team honor in tennis—as a patriotic mission; he once called the great American champion Jimmy Connors "seemingly unpatriotic" for his refusal to participate in the Cup rounds.

Ashe's stint as Davis Cup captain was in many respects quite successful; under his guidance America won two consecutive championships, a feat unequaled in years. Nevertheless, victory had its price: with his strict sense of court decorum, Ashe was placed in charge of John McEnroe, Connors, and other American prodigies whose foul language, obscene gestures, and public tantrums were giving new meaning to the concept of unsportsmanlike conduct. Ashe found their behavior personally offensive; more to the point, he felt that the reputation of America was being sullied by the bratty conduct of the athletes on his watch.

IF PATRIOTISM and graciousness strike one as unusual attitudes in the increasingly uncontrolled world of American professional sports, Ashe's opinions on race relations must be regarded as even more unconventional. To be sure, Ashe writes that "being black is the greatest burden I've had to bear." Yet one will search in vain in this book for the signs of racial self-pity, rationalizations for failure, or the embittered resentment of America which have become the stock-in-trade of so many commentators on American race relations.

It should be stressed that on most political questions Ashe comes across as a traditional liberal. He favors an activist government, endorses abortion rights, was a participant in the protest movement against South African apartheid, and regards Nelson Mandela with an almost worshipful attitude. What is more, he repeatedly traces the current predicament of black Americans to the centuries of slavery and discrimination they endured. Yet at the same time, he insists that this history of oppression not be employed as an excuse for anti-social behavior, black chauvinism, or bogus appeals to racial solidarity.

Ashe is especially concerned

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with what he sees as the corruption of black youth by the expectation that jobs and university admissions will be distributed to them on the basis of their skin color. He recalls with dismay a dialogue with black male athletes from Stamford, Connecticut, who insisted they were "entitled" to scholarships, even over athletes with better academic records. "On display," he observes, "was the increasingly dominant African-American adolescent ethos of entitlement, of 'You Owe Me,' which I consider monstrous."

Ashe encountered a similarly depressing response from the son of an affluent physician and personal friend. This young man had attended elite prep schools and had recently graduated from a prestigious law school. Yet despite his background, he told Ashe that he would have accepted admission to law school on an affirmative-action track, with the justification that as a member of a group which had been "historically abused and discriminated against" he was "entitled to redress," that it was important that the law profession be more ethnically diverse, and that law-school entrance tests were anyway "slanted" to benefit whites.

In criticizing the entitlement mentality, Ashe does not limit his discussion to its effects on the sons and daughters of the well-off. Once, given the option of teaching a course at Yale or at a predominantly minority college in Miami, Ashe chose the latter out of an obligation to serve black youth. His first jolt came when, with few exceptions, he received student essays that were incoherent, ungrammatical, and lacking in logic. A second jolt came when the friend who had persuaded Ashe to accept the teaching post counseled him to refrain from judging his students by the standards to which he, as a student in segregated schools, had been held, and suggested that Ashe had a responsibility not to allow black youths to fail.

Grudgingly accepting the premise that his standards were too demanding for these particular students, Ashe received a final jolt when they reciprocated by adopting a lackadaisical attitude, cutting sessions, drifting in late, and refusing to complete the assigned work. At this juncture, Ashe reports, he "didn't want to hear about the effects of history and the legacy of slavery and segregation. At some point, each individual is responsible for his or her fate."

ASHE's pointed remarks about the condition of black America are couched in a tone not of chastisement but rather of agonized concern. The spiritual decline of blacks, he emphasizes, mirrors a breakdown in values that has infected the entire society. But the consequences have been most severe for blacks, and he charges those in positions of leadership openly to confront their people's problems and not evade the challenge by heaping blame on white society.

Ashe is particularly harsh in his assessment of the Black Power philosophy, which he identifies as the source of a ruinous decline in political morality. He sees the emergence of Black Power in the late 1960's as ushering in a time when "the amoral quest for naked and vengeful power" would supplant "the dominance of morality in African-American culture." The advocates of Black Power, Ashe contends,

> . . . seemed to abandon principle in their thinking and their actions. What started as a movement toward liberation ended too often as a regime of dogmatism, coercion, hatred, violence, and what would later be called sexism. I saw a chilling similarity between the segregation that ruled my youth and the proposed new order under Black Power. For the first seventeen years of my life white people in Virginia told me what I could do, where I could go to church, in which taxi I could ride, where I had to sit on the bus, in which stores I could try on a coat. Then, in my second seventeen years, militant black people were trying to tell me, once again, what to think and do.

That such uncompromising opinions have appeared only after Arthur Ashe's death unfortunately means that their impact has been blunted. For while *Days of Grace* has been quite favorably reviewed, most comment has been directed toward Ashe's struggle with heart disease and AIDS, his tennis career, and the brief passage in which he criticizes two prominent black basketball stars, Magic Johnson and Wilt Chamberlain, for publicly bragging about their sexual conquests. His opinions on race, highly controversial under normal circumstances, have failed to stimulate serious debate.

One feels certain that, had he not fallen victim to AIDS, Ashe would have continued to speak out boldly on issues of American racial policy. *Days of Grace* reveals a man who seems to have succeeded in realizing the combination, highly unusual today, of a strong degree of American patriotism and a powerful sense of racial pride. It also reveals a man unsettled by the moral condition into which his country has fallen and disturbed by the deteriorated state of many of his fellow blacks. And it reveals a man who, by his achievements and his example, made an inestimable and still underappreciated contribution to his society and to his race.

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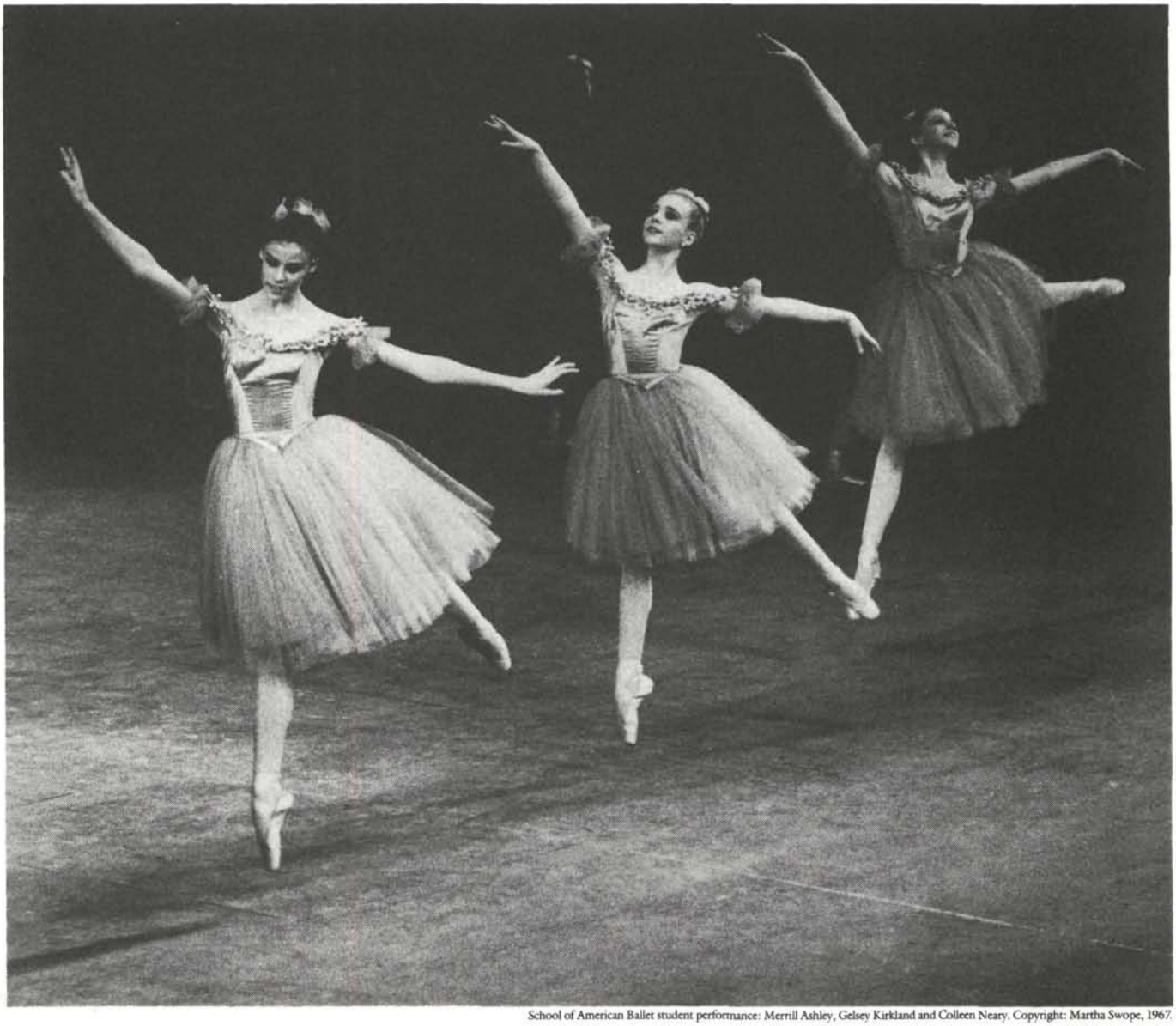

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